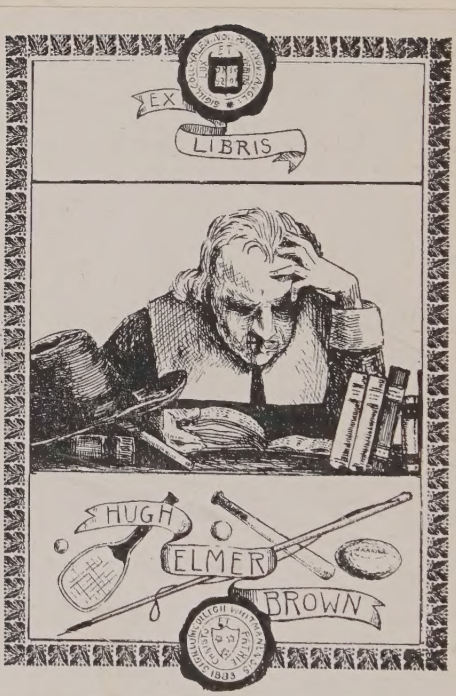
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THE INESCAPABLE CHRIST

THE INESCAPABLE CHRIST

BY

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NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1925

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Printed in the United States of America

TO

MARY R. SANFORD

IN ABIDING GRATITUDE

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THE INESCAPABLE CHRIST

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THIS book begins in the one way in which I long thought that no similar book ought to begin. In the setting forth of a general religious theme, it used to seem to me inappropriate to mark the pages with such a word as "I." Why should a writer thus seem to intrude his own sharply labelled personality upon his readers? Was it not his business rather to state religious truth objectively, as though the neutral fact itself were thus finding expression through him as an anonymous but sufficient medium? That is the way in which I believed a book of this kind ought to be written. But I cannot write this book that way.

The reason is in part because I remember two sentences which came to me in letters after a certain other book was written. One writer said: "You have spoken for us—as we would like to have spoken for ourselves." And another said: "There are so many books full

of indisputable facts but empty of life, that when I read your words, I was startled to feel, not that your book was in my hands, but that you yourself were here. I venture to tell you that the message you have written has reached one obscure priest's heart."

This book, like that other one, may be empty of various things, but I would not have it be "empty of life." And the more I think of the conditions which those words suggest, the more I feel that this book at least, in order not to be empty of life, must be personal in its approach. Indeed, though it seem a paradox, it is nevertheless yet true that such a book must use the "I" and "You" of direct and personal converse to preserve its right humility. For what I set forth in these pages does not pretend to be any compendium of theology. It does not pretend to represent a roundness of truth equally unassailable from all approaches. It is simply the expression of certain great luminous suggestions which seem real to me, and may seem real to some, though doubtless not to all, of those who may read the pages which are to follow.

There is a noble English poem in the light of the meaning of which I should like the title of this book to be construed—Francis

Thompson's *Hound of Heaven.* In it, as all who have read it know, there is pictured the tireless pursuit of the love of God after the blindly fugitive souls of men. Unhurrying, yet unwearying, the steady feet come on.

"Nigh and nigh draws the chase
With unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
And past those noised Feet
A voice comes yet more fleet——
'Lo, naught contents thee, who content'st not
Me.'"

So down the roadways of our restless time come the feet of the inescapable Christ. In mind and will we may flee him down many by-ways; but the reality that is in him cannot be outdistanced nor denied. I seem to hear the echo of those footsteps through our world today, and the simple purpose of this writing is to ask of others, "Do you hear them too?"

CHAPTER II

REALITY AND RELIGION

It is obvious to all that we are passing through a time of religious re-valuations. The inherited influence of tradition may be strong; but the influence of our contemporary desire for reality is stronger. Men and women are asking what provable facts there are in the Christian experience, and what there is in the Christian Gospel which in this twentieth century can stand the wear and tear of our actual world.

This desire for reality has its own determined method of search. We have long passed out of that period when it was the fashion of thought for men to assume large general propositions and then deduce what they called facts from these. Our process of reasoning has reversed that old direction. We begin with a demonstrable matter of experience first. That is the way the physical sciences have won their triumphs in their realm, and their ex-

ample is bound to influence every other realm of thinking. If we are to get at general truths at all, we must get at them inductively, drawing them not from the clouds of vague speculation down, but building them from the solid bottom up. Science proceeds by the laborious but sure method of experiment. It examines the plain material of our universe to see what it looks like, to find what possibilities it suggests, to try these possibilities and find out what they lead to, and to adopt general theories and conclusions only in so far as these are built up out of the slowly accumulating proof. That master interpreter of the spirit of science in the last century, Thomas H. Huxley, wrote: "Science seems to me to teach in the highest and strongest manner * * * Sit down before fact as a little child, be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever abysses nature leads, or you shall learn nothing. I have only begun to learn content and peace of mind since I have resolved at all risks to do this."

Now it must be confessed that this spirit of patient investigation which is willing to divest itself of foregone conclusions and follow the objective leading of reality, has often not seemed to be characteristic of even very great

religious representatives. Again and again leaders of the Church have passionately laid hold of some intellectual conviction which they insisted must be vital to religion, and have set out to conform facts to their conviction; and if the facts would not conform, so much the worse for facts. Andrew D. White, in his *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom,* reminds us that it was no less a person than Martin Luther who waxed indignant against Copernicus because he thought that the discoveries of the great astronomer upset religious ideas. "People give ear," he wrote, "to an upstart astrologer who strove to show that the earth revolves, not the heavens or the firmament, the sun and the moon. Whoever wishes to appear clever must devise some new system, which of all systems is of course the very best. This fool wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy, but sacred scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and not the earth." And another vehement old spokesman of the Church who was defending against those whom he considered impious questioners the doctrine that the earth was created literally according to the account in the Book of Genesis, and created "about five thousand,

sixe hundred and odde years agoe," paid his respects to the doubters in this fashion: "And if they aske what God was doing before this short number of yeares, we answere with St. Augustine, replying to such questioners, that He was framing Hell for them."

Of those two tempers of mind, it is obvious that the one which has been expressed in the physical sciences has conquered. Ecclesiastics who make large pronouncements as to what they call the revealed truths of Holy Church and which are usually, as a matter of fact, nothing but their own codified and congealed opinions, may not know it. Nevertheless, the fact is plain enough to the minds of the multitude. Whatever claims to be reality is destined to stand or fall today not on the strength of the testimonials it can bring from the past, nor on the vehement chorus of those who can be marshalled to say that no other idea is orthodox. Reality will be determined by the inexorable criterion of whether or not the facts of experience, impartially examined, do establish the principle put forward as being truth.

Moreover, it needs to be admitted that our human affairs in these last ten or fifteen years have not tended to lead the thought of those

now coming to maturity toward the easy conclusion that among the forces of our world Christianity is a dominant reality. Multitudes of young people have been tempted to become cynical and contemptuous of the principles which had been professed by the older generation, the net result of whose guidance had been to lead our world into such a muddle and mess of blood and slaughter and insane destruction as the devil himself could not have improved upon. "So this is what nations that called themselves Christians have come to," the younger minds began to say within themselves. "This is the best that our fathers could do with their complacent churchianity. So far as we can see, there has been a vast amount of hypocritical cant and lying. The western world has pretended to be Christian, and some of the things which it has come to would make a decent pagan blush. It has pretended to believe in the gospel of unselfishness, and it has made industry a scramble of competitive selfishness where Christian ideals are shoved aside. It has salved its conscience piously by printing 'In God We Trust' upon the dollar, and then has made the dollar into its god. It claimed to represent Christ who said that he died not for

one nation but for mankind, and then, in the name of Christ, each nation blessed its own armies and sent them out to kill one another, while all the preachers, each in his own country, preached about the holy war. * * * If all these things are inevitable, let us call them by their true names. Let us have done with a religion which is only a veneer, admit that life is materialistic, and deal with it according to that truth."

In all this, I do not mean to say that such a conclusion as this is the one which the mind of youth desires to arrive at. On the contrary, in that disillusionment with ideals which is so prevalent in our day, there is something deeply wounded. The finest spirits have felt a sense of outrage that a world which pretended to be so high and so advanced should, in the time of revelation, have proved so mean and savage. But in the face of facts as they are, they are determined that they will not lie, and most of all, they will not lie to themselves. They are alienated from Christianity, or have simply passed it by indifferently as a thing discredited. It is better, they think, to be true to the poor common fact than to give lip homage to a pretentious lie. It is better not to claim to have any religion than to talk pious phrases

about a religion which crumbles when the test comes. At any rate, let us be honest with ourselves. There is a spiritual bareness, contemptuous of masks and disguises and elaborate pretense, which, like the nakedness of the Garden of Eden, can walk unashamed in the virginal integrity of life that may begin anew.

Thus it comes about that the impulse to be true to the facts without and to be true to ourselves within, has destroyed the possibility of religion winning the allegiance of this generation by any specious commendation. As far as organized religion is concerned, there are multitudes today who simply leave it out of their calculation as negligible.

There is much that ought to be honored in the spirit which moves through all this. Undeniably in all the ages, and in our own as well, we have often said we had a religion when the only thing we had was smugness and complacency and counterfeit. We have often pretended to build our houses on the rock when we were building them upon the sand; and often the Church has put up the grandiose structures of its supposed efficacy, mumbled its monotones, and made hypnotic gestures to the people by the hands of priests, while habit and familiarity made the crowd

conform. Thank God for the vehement wind of cleansing sincerity which is blowing through our modern world, a wind from the wide free spaces of men's untrammelled thinking, terrible with the sweep of a vast sincerity, destroying, but cleansing too! Organized Christianity will face a winnowing in our time. There will be fear and panic, as there already are; and men will cry that the very ark of God is about to be overthrown. But we shall see in our time what the ark is and where it is,—that ark of the very truth of God, if we possess it, which cannot be overthrown. Let the winds blow, then, no matter from what provinces of insurgent life they rise, for the winds too are of God! Let those false constructions of religion which are built upon the sand go down,— our formalities, our wanton little snobbishness of inherited possession which we mistake for congregational loyalty, our somnolent recitation of forms we do not deeply mean, and our blank incredulity that out in the life of business and politics Christianity is supposed to become a conquering fact. Let ostentations crumble if they will; —and then let us see what remains. Let us perceive then whether there be a central simplicity of the religion of Jesus which no

winds nor storms can shake, and the flags of whose victorious conviction shall stream the more superbly from its walls!

With such willingness to face the test of truth must organized Christianity meet the insurgent spirit of our time, and especially of the younger generation. And then Christianity can go forward to ask of all those who claim to want to build their lives on facts this further question. You desire reality. So be it. You desire no pretense over and above reality to pad it, to distort it, and belie it. That is well. But if you want nothing *more* than reality, is it not equally important that you should want nothing *less?* Truly to want reality is to want the whole of it, because to take a part and to say that *that* is the whole is in itself a lie. If you limit yourself to a fragment of truth and by word or silence deny the rest, then you have been false to truth. You, therefore, who so certainly want reality and want truth, are you sure that you know what all of truth and all of reality are?

You cannot answer that question until you remember that there are different planes of reality, and that different faculties of perception may be required to grasp the facts on

these different planes. Here is a man who deals with the realities of physical science. It is clear that his facts are very genuine things. He studies the composition of various metals and their tensile strength. He works out mathematically the relationship of his beams and girders and cables to the strain distributed amongst them, and out of the elements which he employs in obedience to those laws of truth which he has investigated, he builds a bridge; and over the great span which he has flung across the river, the unceasing flood of traffic pours confidently on. Here, again, is the engineer who masters the strange energy of electricity and with it drives great dynamos, lights whole cities, turns the wheels of flashing subway trains where millions of people ride. Here are pioneers in aviation like the Wrights who have studied the lifting power of planes as against the pull of gravitation, perfected the gasolene motor for driving force, and presently have made the aeroplane by which men who have conquered the earth are conquering now the sky. All these triumphs of our modern world are witnesses to that way of achieving truth which we have already recognized,—the way which begins not with cloudy speculation, but rather with the patient study

of those actual facts and forces which our world presents, to the end that from that study we may learn to unlock the hidden power.

All this, we say, is plain and obvious; but mark now another range of facts. Here is a man who sits down at a table with a piece of ruled paper and a pen. His eyes are full of dreams, his face is listening, as though the silence spoke to him. Then on the paper he writes his little circles, and dots, and lines. Tomorrow he will take it to a piano or an organ and he will play the music which his imagination has written there. Men and women will listen, and faces which have been dull and uninspired, weary faces, worried faces, will commence to glow. At the touch of that music something has happened within themselves; golden bells are ringing in the watch towers of the morning; windows of their imagination open, and out from their shuttered and common selves they seem to pass, to hear the singing of larks, to see the sunlight breaking over eastern hills, to walk beside the shores of mystic oceans, or rest by quiet waters silvered by the moon. If you know nothing of music, you will say that that is nonsense. They have never moved nor stirred, never done anything at all except to

stay in one place and gaze fixedly at a man whose fingers are travelling back and forth along a keyboard. Nevertheless, they will tell you that their spirits have gone on mighty journeyings; and presently, when they go out into the street, life may seem a finer thing to them, its hopes more golden and their own souls lifted up with cleaner readiness to meet its challenge, because of that inner impulse which the music has let loose. There are facts here which you cannot measure by the physical sciences. You cannot reckon them in quantitative terms of weight or mass or molecular energy; but they are facts which he who is concerned with the dull reality of life must reckon with, nevertheless.

The reason why these facts must be reckoned with is because in this world of ours that which matters most is not what happens to the outside of things, but what happens to the inside of people. Except in relation to human beings, all our material productions would be mere meaningless commotion upon the surface of a planet which had better have been left undisturbed. Suppose the whole human race died out upon our earth, and the jungle crept back upon our civilization. What sense or value would our buildings, our bridges, our

railroads, and all the rest of our creations have for wolves and monkeys which would prowl and clamber about the magnificent shells which we had left? And what sense do all these creations of ours represent *now* except in so far as they are making possible the life of a race whose glory lies in the thoughts and emotions which go on within its spirit? If we want to talk about important realities, therefore, it is mere childishness to imagine that these are comprehended in the physical sciences which make the material civilization we live in. The supreme realities are the influences which make human beings what they are—and what they ought to be.

Here we come to the threshold of religion. The plain truth is that in order to get any sense out of our world and our existence in it, we must ask what we are here for, what infinite purpose we are expressing, and what or Who it is that gives us the significance we possess. To find the answer, we must include all the factors of our fullest selves. We can explain some things in this thrilling universe by the theory that it all came out of nothing but "dynamic dirt going it blind." But that materialistic notion breaks down before the

mightier facts—if we ourselves are big enough to know how mighty the great facts are! Beauty and laughter and love, heroism and sacrifice, the innocence of childhood and the wonder of a man's own mother, lead us face to face with something which tells us that we must worship before we can understand.

In a recent book of Dean Inge's there is a final chapter which deals with the life and spirit of a little girl before whose childish beauty strong men and women were humbled and lifted up again into a holy joy. He wrote of her:

"On Palm Sunday I repeated to her Milton's sonnet on his blindness; and when I came to 'They also serve who only stand and wait,' I thought it right to say, 'Paula, I should like you to remember that last line. You will never know how much you have done for all of us in this house, and for many others, simply by being what God has helped you to be.'"

And later, after telling of the end, which came for her in Holy Week, he wrote:

"I hope my readers will not think that I have said too much about our little girl. There are, thank God, countless other beautiful child characters, and many may justly think that their own children are not less worthy of commemoration.

But let what I have written be taken as a reverent tribute to the child nature, which our Saviour loved and bade us to imitate. At a time when so much of our literature is strangely blind to the glory and excellence of human nature at its best, I do not think that we can be blamed for making known what we have ourselves seen of the beauty of holiness in a short life, and for showing how many sweet natures there are in the world, swift to recognize and love that beauty when they see it in another * * * Some may perhaps have the same feeling that we have, that there may be a wonderful completeness in a life which only lasted a few years. 'She, being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time, for her soul was dear to the Lord.' "

And in one of the Christmas magazines of 1924, the article which held the leading place had to do with a little boy, Richard Derby, and with his quaint penetrating sayings and his gentle wondering ways. The writer of the story concluded it thus:

"He is not really dead: whoever once felt the touch of his boyish hand, feels it still. If greatness lies in what we accomplish that is seen of men, then Richard can claim no shadow of it. He died an obscure little boy, his death noticed in the newspapers merely because he was the grandson of Theodore Roosevelt. But if greatness be an inner quality measured by God, what then?"

"What then?"—except to say that here we have come close to that same inner quality of greatness which has made the spirit of Jesus Christ so immeasurable an influence in the lives of men. One day he said to people, as he told them how they might find the realities of life which all of us more or less gropingly are seeking: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." That is to say, there is a realm of facts which we can perceive with our physical eyes and test with our physical measurements; there is another realm of facts which is open to those whose aesthetic appreciation is sensitive; but there is another and highest range of facts which requires something more than intelligence, and something more than the discernment of the artist or the musician. To that realm the only key is character. If our hearts are clean, if our intentions are true, if we really love goodness and want to find it, then we shall find goodness, and in that goodness we shall discover God.

Here, therefore, is the answer for those who seek reality. They must seek it and find it not in the realm merely of our material measurements. They must find it in those unseen forces wherein the mightiest powers lie. I

know that such expressions as these, lacking for the moment, further explanation, may seem vague to many of our time, but that is the way with all ideals. They seem woven at first out of the delicate fabric of mere imagination, out of star dust, and the far lure of rainbows and the mystery of morning skies. It was for such an imagination that Jesus died on the cross, and ever since that time his spirit has been waiting for the faith of men to crystallize his great ideal into fact. There are signs in the world that it is being crystallized. We have many harshnesses and cruelties in our organized life still; but there is awaking everywhere a more just and sensitive conscience, and multitudes of men are sincerely trying to find the way to put the spirit of Jesus into their business and bring the spirit of Jesus into the relationship of one nation with another. Beside that spirit, all hard materialism and shrewd worldliness that make pretence of wisdom shall be mere clanging brass and tinkling cymbals. The crowd which crucified Jesus could see nothing in him except a beaten and a broken man; but the little group of devoted women, and more slowly that group of devoted men, were being refined to the purity of heart which saw in him the

deathless reality against which death and hell could not prevail.* They saw that the goodness which he had revealed was irresistible. They said that it should go on marching through the world,—crowned with thorns, but kingly none the less, until every knee should bow before it. And whenever any man attains to purity of heart today,—attains to that simplicity of character which looks upon the world free from our evasions and our falsehoods,—then he knows now that the goodness in human hearts, the faithfulness that lifts men above the common levels, the daily heroism of duty nobly done, the willingness to follow conscience even when it leads in costly ways, are the only forces which are great enough to bring about the salvation of our world. The physical sciences can build the shell of it, art can gild it and garland it, but in order to make this world of ours a place where happy human lives shall live spaciously and find abiding joy, the reality which we must reckon with is that spiritual force of goodness which brings us face to face with God.

* Here and elsewhere, these chapters follow the simplicity of the Book of Common Prayer and of the English Bible itself in printing pronouns which refer to Christ without the capital letter; since, if the facts themselves can be set forth, no convention of frequent capitals should be needed to make plain the uniqueness of "the name which is above every name."

CHAPTER III

WHAT IS SELF-EXPRESSION?

RELIGION in our time, as we have already observed, must meet the test of reality. It must meet also another test. Can it come to us as a fact not arbitrarily imposed, but consonant with the sense of freedom of our inner selves? "Self-expression" is one of the slogans of our day, and not without much warrant. For it is because life seems so new and challenging, that many men and women repudiate such hampering conventions as seem to them to reach out dead hands of the past to barricade the living present. They will not readily suffer anything which harnesses their independence or tries to wave them back by frightened signs of warning from the open roads of bold adventure on which they choose to go. They have a high sense that their personalities are their own, and that in their own way they would test life and taste it and find out what it means.

It is right, therefore, that we should covet self-expression. Upon that principle, let us agree. Exactly what self-expression means, and why it relates itself to Christianity, we shall consider presently; but our thought will have a clearer road if we mark first some of the causes which make the ideal of self-expression so commanding, especially among the youth of today.

I

1. In the first place, therefore, we may say that it was 1914 which woke that impulse in our contemporary mind, or, if 1914 did not do it for us in America, then 1917 did. Until those years, the old world and the new had been moving along in a very satisfied complacency. It was admitted, of course, that our twentieth century civilization had some defects; but in general it was assumed with a smug assurance that the world would progress very comfortably on its way. We were too rich, too busy, and, it was supposed, too intelligent to allow the thing we had builded to be assailed by any such rude madness as a really serious war. Minor broils, of course, there might be here and there, a little blood-letting as a conces-

sion to the remnants of barbarism that might remain among the backward nations, a little panoply and parade of war to give exercise to our military forces and keep the generals and admirals in countenance; but that the crust of civilization should suddenly break and reveal beneath it a seething hell of hate and madness and destroying passion which the conceits of diplomacy and the thin ground of our preoccupations were concealing, few had for a moment dreamed. But the crust did break, and hell did emerge. Death and ruin rode across the earth, and the bewildered men who had gone on spinning their webs of political stratagems flung up their hands and cried for someone to save the world which they had been too dull of mind and too dense of soul even to know was in awful need of saving. They called to the youth to save it. "Our glorious boys," they said, "will rescue these nations of ours. Theirs shall be the romance and glamour of coping with this hell which in spite of us has broken loose." And youth responded, and went out to face the flame, to feed the shattered bodies of millions of young men into graves that yawned and yawned, to tread out at last the fires of war by the myriads of burned and bleeding feet that marched

to the inferno. But meantime youth was thinking. Its innocence of faith was scorched like many other things in that hot hell of war. It remembered in the trenches the old men, not all of them old in years perhaps, but old in heart and in imagination, who had gone on puttering over their devices, counting their money, building their towers of Babel, while the earthquake rumbled unheeded beneath their feet. They were not responsible for the world which had been made before their time; but if any civilization should be left when the war was over, it should be theirs to inherit. Whatever they did with it hardly could be worse than what had been done by the older generation. The principles of that older generation, assuming that they had any, had gone to smash in the wreckage of the world. It was time for youth to take hold, to think its own thoughts, to build its own conclusions. Sometimes bitterly, but often with a very noble idealism, youth which had passed through the flames where no shams could last, was saying that, and although the war now is receding into the past, the mind of this whole generation vibrates to that tremendous revolt of youth in war from the inheritance of a civilization which seemed discredited; and there

is a surge of the unfettered will of youth toward that self-expression which it is not ready to outline, but which it is determined to claim.

2. Another impulse toward self-expression came in the war, not only from the sense of disillusionment with the past, but also from the feeling of the transiency of the present. No one knew in those years what tomorrow would bring forth, or whether there would be any tomorrow. Youth only knew that its comrades were being slain by the tens of thousands. Tomorrow its own death might come. Life was sweet, all the more sweet because it seemed so desperately fleeting. Its satisfactions must be grasped quickly in the little moment while life and laughter lasted. All the fierce surge of life's instinctive emotions must be satisfied today, for tomorrow might be too late. So the days of the war witnessed conventions snapping here and there like threads. Life must enter into its heritage of the sunlight before it went out into sudden dark. With a violent maturity, youth seemed to find itself and for that self to demand expression.

3. Furthermore, there has been woven in with these influences another influence from quite a different quarter. While the disloca-

tions of our outward world broke the mold of old acceptances into which men had been accustomed to fit their thought and left the stream of new thought free to find its self-expression, at the same time a psychology was arising which taught men that this self-expression was the only normal thing for life to seek. This new psychology began, of course, in the laboratories and in the studies of a few scholars here and there; but its message has spread with tremendous rapidity into the consciousness of the multitude. It is not only that thousands of people today know the technical terms of this new psychology, know what it means by the libido, by psychical complexes, by the primary instincts and other terms in this new dialect. Far more important is the fact that the leaven of the modern psychological assumptions has spread all through contemporary literature, so that the minds of innumerable people who have never read a treatise on psychology in their lives absorb its ideas, as these have fermented through novels and essays and all sorts of other popular writings of our day. The general impression has been conveyed that, if the human personality contains an instinctive desire, that desire ought to be satisfied. The declaration of in-

dependence has been written into the inner life, and with revolutionary fervour it has been proclaimed that all the desires of the personality are created free and equal, and all are entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Sometimes, of course, this leads to startling conclusions. Some of the protagonists of the new psychology would look upon the idea of the soul with amused tolerance as being an outgrown complex. The divine right of conscience would seem as old-fashioned as the divine right of kings. The only rule for life is independent living. The only way of self-realization is an untrammelled self-release.

In the kind of self-expression which the last decade in our world's life has exhibited, and which some of the baldly materialistic psychology of our time defends, there obviously is much that is far different from the ideals of Jesus Christ. What is the matter then? Must we say that there is too much of self-expression? On the contrary, I believe the trouble rather is that there has not been enough. We have been creeping and feeling toward self-expression; but we have as yet only dimly learned what it really is. Through these abnormal years, the youth of our world, stung

to indignant revolt against the past by the blunders of that past which some have been compelled tragically to atone for, have not unnaturally turned to anything that was new and fresh and free as a reaction from every old conformity. Boldly, but without discrimination, they have been seeking the realities of life, and the urge of their self-expression, so gallant and yet so blundering, will never be satisfied till it finds out what the realities are.

II

And now, as throwing light upon the meaning of self-expression, we shall turn to consider the personality and the life of Jesus.

Most of his life was lived in Nazareth, and Nazareth was an obscure town hidden among the hills in the unhonored province of Galilee. It did not seem likely that anyone who lived in Nazareth would be able to express himself in a way that should be either thrilling to his own consciousness or arresting to the attention of the world outside. It was the fashion to look contemptuously on Nazareth and upon its inhabitants, nor did Nazareth itself have any high expectation among its townsmen, one of another. When Jesus in

his later ministry had begun to rise into prominence, his fellow-citizens of Nazareth looked at him doubtfully and said, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" Other men in Israel were still more emphatic. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" they inquired contemptously. "Search, and look! for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

Here was one, therefore, who certainly had no eager encouragement of others to call him into greatness. What he was to achieve, he had to achieve out of his own inner resources. Against the indifference of society, he had to lift up some overpowering significance of his independent self if his life was to be prevailing.

The first thing we know about him was that he deeply knew himself. He had a way of praying much. He would go out into solitary places and there commune with his own soul. He would have said that he was communing with God; but the modern psychologist might not grant that there was any God for him to commune with. At any rate it is evident that in those hours of prayer he looked into his own soul under the light of an extraordinary revelation. Whether we use language now which implies that the resources he discov-

ered came from the presence of God which entered into him, or whether we speak in terms which imply that they were a hidden resource of his own personality, either way the fact remains that he did see with sweep of understanding, the strength, the power, and the calmness which were his.

Then presently he took this self of his which he had apprehended and began mightily to express it. He knew his own thoughts, was sure of his own convictions. When he spoke, he spoke with a power before which the poor, little wavering unreal opinions of ordinary men made way. It did not need a psychologist to recognize that. Every commonplace man in the crowd could see it. They were amazed at him, the record tells us, "for he spoke with authority and not as the Scribes." Men perceived also the joyous and thrilling quality of his assurance. He went one Sabbath day into the synagogue of his own town of Nazareth, read the glorious prophecy from Isaiah of him who should say, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that

are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." And he said, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." In his Sermon on the Mount, he recounted the teachings of those who had been counted the spokesmen of God's teachings to Israel in other centuries, and he declared, Thus and thus they said to you of old times; but I say unto you—this new and greater Gospel. Over and above all ancient precedent, beyond the bounds of what men had taught before, the undaunted self-expression of his confident authority went on.

As thus he spoke with the authority of an outgoing independence, so also he lived. There was no range of experience into which he did not enter as though it belonged to him. Life, with all the infinite zest and beauty of it, flooded through his spirit in full tide. In the last night of his life, when he was about to go out to his betrayal and his crucifixion, looking back upon the meaning of life for him, he could say to his disciples, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my *joy* might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Such a spirit as that the Pharisees, bound by their cautious conventions, were never able to understand. They could only misrepresent and sneer. They said that he was a glutton-

ous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners; but he only smiled and went his way to the wedding feast in Cana, to the house of Matthew the Publican, where he had gathered all his former friends together, to every place which had for him the open door of human welcome, through which he could enter into the hearts of men. "Whosoever shall do the will of God," he said, "the same is my brother, and my sister, and my mother." Wherever any human souls were sensitive to God, there he found the family that was like his larger self.

As he touched life widely, so he touched it deeply. It was impossible to ignore him. Either he inspired great love, or he aroused great fear, which led sometimes to destroying hate. Herod the king was afraid of him. When he heard of him, he said, "This is John the Baptist risen from the dead." The soldiers of the temple guard, sent to arrest him, were afraid. They came back and said, "Never man spake like this man." The traders in the temple quailed before him, fearing not so much the lash of little cords which he held in his hand, as the awful majesty of his face. Pilate, cynic that he was, and used to the hard cruelties of his Roman office, was

torn with uncertainty before this man's presence. Even to Pilate, the greatness of Jesus conveyed its overwhelming impression, so that the uneasy Roman was overawed before him.

But, meanwhile, this personality of Jesus which his enemies feared to encounter reached out to lay hold of those who loved him, to enter into them, to make their lives in amazing fashion henceforth his own. The disciples, watching him, saw his faith through all disasters burn undimmed, and they saw that he believed, not passively, not apprehensively, but with victorious joy, in God's inexhaustible power, in the immortality of goodness, and in the measureless destiny of his own soul as it followed on to fulfill the will of God. They would look round about upon the circle of enemies gathering closer, and turn their frightened gaze of inquiry home to Jesus and see his untroubled eyes look back at them. With nameless fear of those fates that seemed to gather, they looked at him and saw him smile. They heard him say that the kingdom of heaven might be only a mustard seed, but it would grow. They saw him gather into his near fellowship the little company of fishermen and peasants, so few, so human, and so unimportant; and yet he said they were

enough. They, together with him, should set in motion the influences that should conquer the world,—they with him upon white horses of the dawn ride forth with lances golden in a sun of faith that never should go down!

At length he had so projected himself into them that the authentic witness of his spirit shone about them. In the early days of the Church at Jerusalem, when Peter and John were arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin, men "took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus." They in their lives were to be the extension of their Master's life. Paul, who came later to be the greatest of the apostles, expressed the truth when he wrote, "Henceforth I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." And that has gone on being true for innumerable lives all down the centuries. Continuously from the time of Jesus until now, there have been those through whose transparent souls the spirit of that greater one is shining.

If now we are seeking for grandeur of self-expression, is there anything in all the history of our world which compares with this? Here was one in whom there dwelt a life so prevailing that, not only his immediate environment, but the far-reaching energies of

innumerable other lives became the projections of himself; and yet the strange thing was that this illimitable victory came out of immediate defeat. His power to be everything arose from his willingness to be brought to naught. The words which he commanded his disciples had come out of his own personal experience. He also had refused to seek his life, knowing that in that way he should lose it. Deliberately he had lost it, in order that he might find it again. He was ready that his own body should be broken, that his human life should be brought to its tragic end, in order that the life of God within him might go free. "The son of man," he said, "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." He dared the paradox of the cross, while his enemies cried, "He saved others, himself he cannot save." "If I be lifted up," he said, "I will draw all men unto me." He refused to live within that narrow sphere of experience, whether of joy or pain, that belonged to his individual self. Through love and sacrifice, he entered into that larger self of the whole human race which needs redemption, and made *that* the field of his deathless self-expression.

III

It remains now that we should link together the two thoughts which we have hitherto been following. We recognized the fact that this present generation is demanding freedom to live its own life in its own way. We turned then to consider the example of Jesus and asked ourselves in what way he found the freedom and fulness of life. Now we would determine what relationship these two facts have one to another. Can the religion of Jesus give to the spirit of our youth today fulfilment of what it is seeking? And is there something in the Gospel which forever is so vital that it is as new as the newest revelation of psychology, and more important?

To begin with then, let us remember that this self-expression which we say we want, if it is to have any real dignity at all, must be a positive thing. It does not mean the release from one set of old controls in order merely to fall into bondage to a new one. There can be as much cant and crass new-fangled orthodoxy in the dogmas of modern freedom as ever there were in the most old-fashioned dogmas of organized religion. Some of our contem-

poraries consider themselves emancipated from anything so old-fashioned as the authority of the Bible, and then meekly accept the brazen authority of—let us say—*The American Mercury*. They think they have outgrown the ancient seers and prophets; but an oracle they must have, so they find him in Prophet H. L. Mencken. Many of our young people to day who imagine themselves to be free are, as a matter of fact, bound in rigid ideas which are ludicrous in their solemnity. In literary criticism, in their outlook upon life, and in their standards of values, their minds and spirits are being stereotyped to a common pattern. The notion that all the old truths have been overthrown by the new cleverness, and that agelong objects of reverence have been whistled away by a triumphant cynicism, may become an obsession which turns a so-called freedom into the meanest kind of intellectual servitude.

And if conformity to those new ideas which happen to be the fashion in some quarters today is not freedom, neither is there any worthy freedom in the attitude of mind which, without adopting any new conventions, contents itself merely with abjuring old ones. It is very easy to see the faults in the civilization

we have inherited, and in these revolutionary times it is not to be wondered at that youth has seen them. It is easy to see that many of the moral principles which people formerly pretended to live by were largely mixed with sham. It is easy to see also that there was something abominably wrong with the intellectual and spiritual life of a generation which could do no better for its world than to let it drift into the hideous catastrophe of the great war. But merely to condemn indiscriminately everything which *has* been and to look upon all our inheritance with an idle superciliousness is no way toward virile self-expression. It is a very cheap freedom which holds itself free to do nothing but sneer. The real freedom which youth must seek is the liberation of mind from prejudice whether old or new, so that, while it distinguishes whatever may have been specious in our inherited morals, our religion, and our national ideals, it may with equal assurance lay hold upon every inherited principle that has been noble, and carry these forward into clearer expression for our time.

But meanwhile the pity of it is that many of the young lives today, so vital and so eager in their search for self-expression, are not finding any self-expression for the simple reason

that they have no self. They substitute a sort of restless mental motion for any self-conscious and self-mastered soul. Too many individuals of our time are like the miniature whirlpools which one may see by the score in a swiftly flowing river. There in the current are these small vortices, no wider than one's hand, fierce little centres of suction which draw about and into themselves whatever foam may be floating upon the surface of the river, and yet are themselves nothing but a dizzy rotation round a central emptiness. That is not an unfair simile for some of the uninspired faces and the empty lives which the unguided spirit of revolt has produced among certain of our young people now. There is a certain wild exhilaration about them. They may draw into their experience much that floats superficially upon the river of the general life. But looking upon them, one cannot escape the impression that there is nothing substantial at the centre of themselves. They have no inner body of conviction. They are mere creatures of the current, formed by it and dependent upon it for whatever activity they have. If one hopes in them for dignity and substance of conviction, hope is apt to end in disappointment.

If, therefore, we desire self-expression, surely it is needful first that we should attain and fashion a self substantial enough to be expressed. From this civilization, so distracting in its whirling outward forces, we must somehow win that detachment of the independent soul which will let us think and meditate and be conscious of some genuine life within. That is one thing which the West will need to learn from the East as represented today in the message of India. The amazing power of Mahatma Gandhi is bringing thoughtful people back to the realization of where it is that power lies. It lies within the life and not without it. Let a personality once be sure of itself, let it find the deep poise of its own matured convictions, let it fashion the fulcrum of its own self-mastered soul, and from that fulcrum its leverage will move the world. To this all great masters of the inner life have borne their witness. In this the first secret of the power of Jesus lay, and men and women now who want to find themselves must first learn from him to look within, and through thought and prayer and long communion to understand the meaning of their souls.

But the real self-expression involves also another step. It is not only the inner look

which acquaints us with our personal selves. It is also the going forth to find that larger self which belongs to us in the life of others. The modern psychologists write of what they call the herd instinct. That is a description in biological terms of the universal fact that no individual can be complete within himself, but that every one has the instinctive desire for association with others of his kind. Life lived alone is starved and fragmentary. Only in sympathetic contact with the larger group do we satisfy those instincts of fellowship which are as much a part of our nature as that narrower self-seeking which only a distorted philosophy can ever imagine to express the full and normal life. This thing which some call the herd instinct and some call the social instinct, which all students of human personality recognize, religion lifts into the beauty of its own clear ideal. Woven through all our human life from its first beginnings up and on, part of our inmost and most imperative nature, is that which religion turns from an unconscious instinct into a conscious ideal. It is the spiritual truth that no man liveth unto himself and no man dieth unto himself. It is the principle of brotherhood. It is the eternal truth that if any man shuts his life into his

own narrow concerns and imagines that thus he saves it, he shall surely lose it, and only as he loses the narrow self in larger fellowship can he greatly save it.

Does not every aspect of the life around us prove this great truth of the way the self is lost or won? Here is a girl who grows up into womanhood, accustomed only to self-indulgence, jealous of her own prejudices and caprices, acknowledging allegiance to no affections which conflict with the thing she finds it agreeable to do. Is she gaining satisfaction? Look at her and see. Her irritability and her restlessness, her utter boredom at life in general, increase by the very measure of her hectic desire to be happy. Here are men in business who will tell you that, in spite of outward success and wealth and position, they are not content; and the reason is that with them also their egoistic impulse has chained and starved the equally legitimate and imperious other part of themselves. They have no time for wide thoughts and imaginative loyalties. They are so busy going ahead in their narrow groove that they have lost touch with the heart-warming human fellowship.

Edward Everett Hale, in his story of *A Man without a Country,* has dramatized

the fate of a man who, on the plane of civic loyalty, utterly forswore the larger self. Philip Nolan, in a fit of anger, said that he could wish that he might never hear the name of America again. His wish was granted. All the rest of his life he was to sail upon a vessel of his country's navy, free to do as he pleased so long as he never heard his country's name nor stepped upon her shores. At length the thing that he had desired became his direst torture. He had saved a part of himself, but flung away his loyalty, and year by year he came to know that life was shame and ashes without the thing which he had lost.

How are such pitiful efforts at the saving of self changed into the true self-expression by which the whole self may be found? It is no mysterious thing. The most familiar realities of life show us that achievement just as truly as they may show us the failures on the other side. The girl who has been self-centred in her indulgent irresponsibility enters into some new relationship that calls her out to wider living. Life opens for her a gateway into its greater expectations. The challenge of little children who look up to her call out the increased resources of her soul. And in the willing loss of much that used to seem her

very self she finds a self that is infinitely more full of joy. Or perhaps it is not an intimate personal relationship, but some need of general service which may call. In the later years of the war there was printed a little book which Dr. Richard C. Cabot, in an introduction printed as its foreword, called "one of the most intimate and holy things which have been saved for our comfort out of the whirlpool of embattled Europe." It was the diary of a nurse, and writing from a front-line hospital, with every nerve and fibre taxed to its utmost to cope with the flood of suffering that poured around her, she said, "Actually for the first time in my life I begin to feel as a normal being should, in spite of the blood and anguish in which I move. I really am *useful,* that is all, and too busy to remember myself, past, present, or future." Nor can I myself ever forget a man at whose side I stood as he lay dying after the battle of San Mihiel. He was a sergeant in command of a party mending the wire between the lines. The party was fired upon, and he was mortally wounded, was brought in by his companions, the rest of them coming through unscathed. The only thing he said about it all was this, "I certainly was proud that none of the other boys got hurt."

His life was a larger thing than his own existence. These men for whom he was responsible were a part of himself, and, because they were living, he had forgotten that he might die.

There was self-expression and self-expansion which had learned some of the secret of the life of Jesus. But the principle of this is not confined to some dramatic moment. Wherever any man identifies himself with the life of his fellows, whenever a man tries to think less of his own safety and his own gain and more of that great needy human life which his privilege of wealth or position has given him a chance to help and lead, then he has begun to learn that self-expression in which his own best pride and honor shall be satisfied.

For the incarnation of the divine in Jesus was not some lonely miracle. It was the flowering in him of that which in some measure is meant to come true in all of us. We have not attained our self-expression until we have released the imprisoned divineness within ourselves. There is something in us which is greater and more beautiful than we can know until the adventure of a higher faith has brought it to expression. That is the presence

of God in us that waits to be fulfilled. His Holy Spirit may be caged within our narrow selves like a bird that droops and pines. But we cannot kill that spirit in its cage. Still it will be longing, like some wide-winged bird of the sea, for the infinite distances and the sweep of the ocean wind. There is a glimmer of the Christ in us which reaches out to identify itself with holy loyalties, to increase those forces in the world which make for wonder and for worship, to claim its brotherhood with all other lives that need the inspiration of his help. Until we find that life of Christ within us and let it go forth through us, we have never found our self-expression. If we save our life for less than he would have it be, we lose it. Only as we lose it in the thought of him, we save it mightily.

CHAPTER IV

THE INCLUSIVENESS OF CHRIST

LONG ago the prophet Elijah cried: "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts." There is need today that many should be jealous for the true meaning of that religion which the prophets proclaimed and which Jesus Christ revealed supremely in himself. There is such a jangle of discordant theological noises that the ears of many hardly recognize the still small voice of the reality of God. It is recorded somewhere that once the Shah of Persia was visiting in London and was taken to hear a great orchestra which was to play Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. When all the instruments were tuning up before the symphony began, each man testing his own violin strings or clearing his flute and horn, the Shah sat delighted. His escorts found presently to their dismay that he supposed he was listening to the symphony, and they had some difficulty in undeceiving him. It is pos-

sible that many people today, hearing the miscellaneous noises of religious controversy, imagine that they are listening to the meaning of the religion of Jesus Christ. Somehow they must be helped to understand that this religion is a simpler, wider, and more nobly harmonious thing than they have known. Therefore in this chapter I want to write of the inclusiveness of Jesus Christ. His real gospel transcends the differences which set man at variance with man.

I

There is first the discord of race and nationality. The Chinaman speaks a different tongue from the Canadian; but that is the least of the difference between them. Back of them lies a divergence in heritage, in instinctive values, and in ways of thought as wide apart as the east is from the west. The man in New York does not speak like the man in Calcutta, nor think as he does either. The man of the new world finds the expressions of the old world alien and unattractive. How then are they going to hear and receive the same Gospel?

Yet it has been the genius of Christianity

always to claim that they can. And this superb confidence in the universality of the Gospel involves a double belief. There is the belief, on the one hand, that men of every nation and race, no matter how wide apart they seem, can find the answer to their needs in Jesus. And there is this further belief,—namely, that the Lord whom each race receives will not be according to the conception of another, but intimately related to its own peculiar desires and able to inspire and enlist all its own peculiar gifts.

Look back in Christian history and see what this faith in the universality of Jesus meant. The original disciples, as every one knows, were Jews. There were some who thought that Christianity was meant to be only an improved Judaism. It had no mission nor message outside the limits of that particular people. But Paul and those who caught his spirit had a mightier understanding. Christ was meant not only for Judaea, but for Greece and Rome, not only for the East, but for the West, not only for the great countries of antiquity, but for those newer lands beyond which lay those tribes of barbarians whom the Christian missionaries were presently to reach and make fit for that civilization which we Anglo-Sax-

ons are fain to vaunt ourselves as though we had created. Christ, said St. Paul, had broken the middle wall of partition. He had preached to them that were far off as well as to them that were nigh. No matter what their original difference had been, in the knowledge of the love of Christ, men everywhere were meant to be fellow-citizens with the saints and with the household of God. But mark also that aspect of the Christian faith which we remembered just now. It was not a Christ all colored and confined by Jewish imagination that these other nations were to be compelled to think of. The meaning of Jesus was to be lighted by their own imagination. His inexhaustible suggestion was to shine in new beauty as the glow of their different experience fell upon hitherto unnoticed facets of his saviourhood. So in the missionary progress of the Church, the meaning of Jesus was infinitely enriched. The Jew had thought of Jesus as the Messiah, fulfilling the long dreams of the prophet. The Greek contributed those new insights that came from his conception of Jesus as the bringer of the eternal life. To the full consciousness of what Christianity in the world should be, he brought his philosophy and his sense of

beauty; and the Roman brought his creative sense of order that flowered in Augustine's great picture of the City of God. The Christian consciousness was like the new Jerusalem of the Revelation, the Holy City, the gates of whose meaning are shut neither by night nor day, and into which the nation shall bring the glory and honor of their own peculiar gifts.

It is a thrilling thing to contemplate the bold progress through the years of this faith that Jesus Christ is meant to kindle the minds and win the hearts and enlist the gloriously different fellowship of all kinds and conditions of men. One of the annual reports of the American Bible Society is entitled, "Every Man in his own Tongue." Into how many languages and dialects—would one suppose—has the Bible been translated from the earliest days down to the present time? Into seven hundred and seventy. Ponder the meaning of that. Into 770 different manners of speech, for 770 different sorts of human families, this same message of the gospel has been re-expressed. The gamut runs all the way from the languages of the most enlightened nations to the rude and struggling utterance of backward tribes,—from Abkhasin at the beginning of the alphabet, whatever that

may be, to Zulu at the end; from Arabic and Armenian and Bengalee and Burmese in the East to Eskimo and the language of the Lapps in the north; from the dialects of China to the dialects of Cornwall and Yorkshire in the British Isles; from Sanskrit and the Hindu tongues to the newest evolving languages of nations now in the process of consolidation. All sorts of barriers which the varying circumstances of life produced in the material of language, the translators have had to surmount. How could they translate what bread means in the language of Jesus to the people of Herero Land, who eat only flesh and milk, and know nothing resembling bread? How could they render temptation in the Lord's Prayer to people so little advanced in moral thought that they did not know what temptation meant? But into the minds of the different races, whether spacious or lowly, the interpreters of the Gospel somehow found an open door. When there was no native word with which to render temptation, they wrote the petition of the Lord's Prayer thus, "Show us a good way." And up among the Eskimos of Labrador, who had in their experience no slightest conception of what a lamb might mean, the Moravian Mission-

aries, who translated the Gospel, took the kotik, the little white baby seal, as the symbol which might convey to the Eskimos some sense of the innocence of the Lamb of God. The gateways of the entrance into men's understandings have been infinitely different; but, nevertheless, the truth has entered in. "I know that this book is the word of God," said an old Mohave Indian chief, "because it pulls my heart."

And as the Gospel has entered into the consciousness of the various races, it has issued out again, leading with it the best which those nations could give. Do we not know that our old conception of Christ is richer today because men in so many countries have widened our thought of Him? He means to us not only what the Jewish prophets and Apostles saw that he meant. The great thinkers of the Church in that period when Christianity moved over into the world of Greece have opened wide windows of thought into the eternal wonder of God which Jesus represents. St. Francis of Assisi has clothed the figure of Jesus again with loveliness, as we watch the Master walking in the fragrant garden of that wonderful disciple's life. The great heroes of the Reformation taught men

anew the nearness of Jesus for the needs of every day. The saints of the English Church have woven the thought of him into the very fabric of our Anglo-Saxon thinking. John Wesley and Frederick W. Robertson and Horace Bushnell and Phillips Brooks, each in the radiance of his own discovery of the newness of Jesus, have brought him afresh to the consciousness of our time. And do we not know that still there is much for us of the west to learn? Is it to be supposed that we in our western civilization, we in our rush and hurry and in the temptation of our engrossment with material things, should know all that there is to be known of the significance of Jesus? Shall not the mind of the Orient, from which he came, teach us more deeply what he is? Whenever any Church loses the missionary outlook and the missionary expectation, then it becomes nothing but a pitiful, cramped religious club, which stereotypes the wonder of Jesus into a name for its narrow little ritual and its uninspired observances. It is only as the light of the world that Christ can newly enlighten those who have long confessed his name. Have not the Chinese Christians, for example, who laid down their lives in the Boxer uprising, revealed afresh the reality of

devotion to Christ? From the thought of India, as interpreted today by such a prophet as Mahatma Ghandi, cannot our so-called Christian civilization of the west catch again the corrective meaning of Jesus' words, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the *things* which he possesseth," and, "I am come that ye might have *life.*" The young Indian writer, Mukerji, has described how once, as a boy of twelve, he was sent by his father to a Scotch Presbyterian Mission School, and there his thought was bewildered in the underbrush of sectarian theology, till one day out of that weary tangle the understanding of Jesus sprang into his consciousness, sudden and beautiful, "like a tiger from the jungle." Do we not need the thought of Jesus, fashioned thus from the poetry of other minds, to spring into our Christian consciousness of the West? We need to understand his amazing and formidable significance. We need to feel the sudden glory of it and the terror, too, the terror of his challenge confronting us with its awful reality upon the satisfied paths along which our complacent thinking goes. No way in which we have conceived Jesus is final, because no thought of any nation has fully compassed the significance of him who is the meaning of

man. Here in America our conception of Christianity can become more wonderful and inspiring only as we refuse to be shut within the limitations of those particular theologies and ecclesiastical articles of confession which have come down to us. These are the suggestions of men's partial thoughts, and to these must be added those other suggestions which come to us from the spiritual poetry and the devotional experience of all the other peoples of the world who will help to reveal to us the larger truth of Christianity. In their own tongues, and not merely with our tongues, must they help to describe for us all that he should mean.

II

Thus far we have been thinking of the differences of nationality and the differences of men's tongues, and we have tried to make plain how Christ must be interpreted through them all. Now we shall go forward to consider another sort of difference between the tongues men speak which has to do not with nation as distinguished from nation, but with certain human tendencies in any nation as distinguished from their opposites; and here

again the truth which we want to grasp is the same, namely, that in the tongue which is congenial, not to one group only, but to them all, the Gospel of the meaning of Jesus must be interpreted. It is hard sometimes for conscientious people to admit that there is any other tongue than their own. We are generally more prone to want to correct the other man's supposed discrepancy than to consider the appropriateness of his particular thought. When we were speaking just now of the translation of the Bible into different languages, we remembered that, because the Eskimos had no conception of what a lamb was like, the Lamb of God was rendered as "the little white seal." Dr. Grenfell in his autobiography tells how once on the Labrador Coast they received from a pious lady in England a barrel of clothing, from the bottom of which was extracted a dirty, distorted, and wholly sorry looking woolly toy lamb. "Its raison d'etre," he said, "was a mystery, until we read the legend carefully pinned to one dislocated leg, 'Sent in order that the heathen may know better.'"

"That the heathen may know better" is very often the imagined motive of many of our intellectual intolerances, in the course of which

the heathen are synonymous with those who do not happen to agree with us.

But what we want to achieve is an understanding of the value in Christianity which may seem to disagree with our own.

For the first contrast consider the old and the young. Maturity and age have one language in which they desire to be spoken to. Youth has another, and a different one. Is it possible today for Christianity so to speak that both alike may say, "Behold, we hear in our own tongues the wonderful works of God"?

With what tongue must the Gospel speak if it is to reach the mind and heart of youth? To begin with, it must be the tongue of truthfulness. Much is being said in disparagement of the young people of today; but this certainly can be said to their clear praise. They are impatient of shams and evasions. They want to know reality. No labels, however ancient and honorable they may be, will commend ideas to their acceptance. They have a frankness which sometimes is very rude, but in the heart of it is wholesome. What facts can Christianity really demonstrate about God and about the meaning of Jesus Christ? What real power can Christianity exert upon

our modern world? That is what the young are asking. The less consequential among them ask it flippantly, as though they did not expect an answer; but there is a great body of others who are thoroughly in earnest, young men and women who are considering the problems of this world of ours and see that their elders have made a poor muddle of trying to solve it, and standing now, clear-eyed and fearless, before the facts of our industrial confusion and our international chaos, want to know whether Christianity actually is able to guide the better shaping of our world.

Furthermore, the tongue which is to reach the youth must speak in daring accents. The older generation is usually cautious. It sees that life is a hard struggle at best, and it is intent upon holding what little ground of achievement it has painfully won. But the spirit of youth is ready to dare what has not been dared before. It has no long yesterdays to dismay it, and it looks upon the open horizons of tomorrow. It is not stirred by a defensive Gospel. It has no patience with preaching which is always proclaiming its fears lest something should happen to the Bible or to the Creeds or the Church if new adventures of thought are followed. Youth

wants to follow the adventures, and is confident that they will lead over the hills to larger lands.

And has Jesus no message for spirits such as these? As he is sometimes represented, one might not think so; but the real Jesus has. In him was such courageous truthfulness as no other soul has matched. No sham could stand before him. No pretense could disguise reality from his gaze. He searched men's souls to their innermost corners. He sifted the wheat from the chaff in old institutions and old customs; and because so many functionaries of the state and pretended leaders of religion were revealed as liars and hypocrites before that awful reality of his, they made up their minds to kill him, and they did. It was in a glory of truth that he lived and for the sake of truth that he died. In life and death alike, he dared. He came into a society ruled by old men, old in years and older still in thinking,—grey-bearded priests and scribes who walked decrepitly, feeling their way like a blind man with a stick on any road that tradition had not already made familiar. And he was young, young in years, and young in the splendour of his faith. "Ye have heard it said by them of old time," he told his dis-

ciples in the Sermon of the Mount, "Ah, yes, but listen, that is not all, *I* say unto you." And those words were like a trumpet of adventure, calling the great-hearted and the daring to go with him into a new wideness of the life God means His sons to live. Is there anything which the heart of youth can adventure today in which the figure of Christ does not manifestly go before? Is there any road of moral or spiritual imagination along which his voice of encouragement does not come, "Behold, we hear him speak in our own tongue the wonderful works of God."

Yet, manifestly youth is not all. It would be only a fragmentary Gospel which spoke to the young and had no word for those that now are young no longer, as the years go by. And the Gospel of Jesus is *not* thus fragmentary. No fact in Christian experience is more plain than that the Spirit of the same Lord who has irradiated youth has also glorified maturity and age. Browning had caught the truth when he sang:

"Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand

Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!"

That is what Jesus has made men able to do. Into his life here he brought the mighty suggestion of the eternal life. He taught men that the slackening of their energies which seems so sad a part of age, need bring no sadness at all, if only one will look ahead to see what it may mean. It is like the current of the river which comes to the place where it seems to be slowed and baffled and turned back upon itself. And why? Because the river has wasted away in emptiness? Because its waters are spent and dead? No. But because it has reached the place where, up to meet it, floods the splendor of the tides of God, checking the current of the river for a moment, and then leading it out into the illimitable freedom of the sea. How right it is that the old in years should turn to Jesus for assurance that their living has been worth while, that none of its true values shall be lost, that for the future as for the past God's mercies may be trusted! I remember once going to the bedside of an old man who was dying. For two days he had not spoken a word, and his family who were about him thought that he

had drifted out beyond all understanding of anything they said to him. But I sat down by his bedside and read to him, very slowly and clearly the dear, familiar words of the New Testament, words from the gospel of St. John, words from that incomparable chapter of the letter to the Romans which ends with its triumphant question, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" When I had finished, I said to the man lying there, "Did you hear what I have been reading?" And for the first time in many hours he answered, "Yes, I understood." So not only to the young, facing the adventure of these little years, but to the old also, facing that greater and more glorious adventure of the eternal lands, the voice of Jesus speaks, and hearing it, men know that all is well.

Consider another difference of human groups which requires a two-fold interpretation of the message of Jesus. There are the conservatives, and there are the progressives, —those who cling to that which has been, and those who reach forward to grasp what experience never yet has proved.

The spirit of progress is a costly thing. It breaks up men's contentment. It rouses the

anger of those whose comfortable satisfaction is disturbed. It condemns the pioneer to much loneliness and misunderstanding. Yet its rewards are great. As one of the early voyagers to New England wrote: "Those that love their own chimney-corner and dare not fare beyond their owne towne's end shall never have the honor to see the wonderful workes of God." Only those who dare believe that tomorrow holds something nobler than any experience of yesterday ever widen the boundaries of today.

This generation of ours is filled with the idea of progress. We see all round us the amazing progress which has been made in man's control of the forces of nature. The development of science and the amazing strides of mechanical invention have enabled men to go forward to such a mastery of natural resources and to such a creation of wealth as lay beyond the dreams of former centuries. And in other spheres than the material this same belief in progress stands like an eagle poised on a crag beneath the sky. To chain that eagle or entangle it in the nets of our poor disbeliefs is to kill the noblest aspiration in our modern souls. Men are ready now to launch great flights toward the sun and stars. They

will not believe in the permanence of evil on the basis of arguments simply that evil has always been. They will not believe that something cannot be done tomorrow because there is no precedent for it in the day before. Here is our industrial civilization, devised for the manufacture of things, and resulting often in the maiming and dwarfing of the life of men. "All the practical ideas that we know anything about show that industry must be organized for money profits," says the defender of things as they are; but the great desire arising among men answers, "Yes; but there is no reason why this should forever be so. We must blaze the road ahead until we find an industrial order that shall be estimated by what it does to men and not by what it makes in money, not by the mass of things it produces, but by the happier and more wholesome life which it makes possible for men to live." Is any Christian satisfied with this world as we have it now? Is he satisfied with its class hatreds? Is he satisfied with the kind of motives which so much of our business and commerce depends upon,—motives that teach a man to estimate success by what he gets, regardless of its proportion to what he gives, motives that make it respectable for a man to be rich, regardless of whether

his riches represent any contribution to the public good? Are we satisfied with the kind of business struggle which requires of young men, not that they should have the mind of Jesus, but merely the mind of pagans ready to play their part in the ruthless game? Are we satisfied with a nationalism which, having hardly emerged from the wreckage of one war, is preparing to blunder straight on into another one? Yes. Some are satisfied. I know that. Some there are who sit within the walls of their preoccupation with their own affairs, and, because they think the roof is safe over their heads, never look out of the window to see the menace of a gathering storm. But men who look to Jesus Christ for guidance cannot be satisfied. Civilization today needs its leaders who will show it the way of life and peace, and to those who aspire to be such leaders the voice of Jesus speaks in their own tongue.

But have the conservatives no place in Christianity? It will be a startling matter if any one should answer that question, No. There might be a vast thinning in the pews, for a great many leading Church members distinctly prefer to be classed as conservatives. But it may as well be recognized that there is

a kind of conservatism which has no affinity with the spirit of Jesus. The Pharisees and Scribes were conservatives, and they hated him because he went beyond the limits in which they were determined that their conventionally arranged politics and religion should remain. But there is another kind of conservatism which is a right and noble thing. It is the spirit which values the past not as antagonistic to the possibility of a better future, but as the foundation upon which that future must be built. Without conservatism such as this there can be no sure achievement, but only bubbles blown in the air. Jesus himself was that kind of a conservative. He loved the Church of his fathers. He was steeped in the holy thoughts and patriotic dreams of the earlier years. He took into his own soul all the best which the other generations had learned, and that is what the wise must do today. The shallow flippancy which scorns the lessons of yesterday, the reckless ignorance which imagines that the new is the infallible, will lead to nothing but disintegration. The voice of Christ is summoning to his service those truly Christian conservatives who reverence in the past those principles of conduct, those moral ideals and spiritual convictions which have an

eternal meaning, and resolutely desire to see these carried into every effort toward a new and supposedly more desirable world.

Finally, there is the difference between the institutionalist and the independent, and these also must be helped to hear each in his own tongue the message of the lordship of Christ.

Though the hastier spokesmen of our time are prone to forget it, there is abiding value for religion in the institution, and in the loyalty which guards it. The spirit cannot afford to hold cheap its own historic forms.

A brilliant interpreter of modern religious consciousness, in an address before the alumni of a theological school, likened the forms of Christian thought and worship which our contemporary minds may find no longer vital to the last year's leaves still clinging to the branches of the trees before the sap rises in the spring. They are dead and negligible. The new leaves will push them off with the irresistible pressure of the newer life; and they will vanish so certainly that none need concern himself to hasten their departure.

All metaphors are of necessity imperfect, but that one is more misleadingly imperfect than most. The true relationship between the

past and the present expressions of the religious spirit is *not* a relationship as between dead leaves and new leaves—a mere supersession of one by the other, and a life in the new which has no continuing dependence upon the old. A finer representation is that which is found not in the leaves, but in the tree itself. It is in only a little part of the trunk of a tree that the living forces move. Close under the bark the sap runs, outside the latest concentric circle of the wood which marks the growth of other years. Girdle the tree with only a shallow gash, and you have yet wounded it sufficiently to kill it. Destroy the channel through which there runs the sap that is the tree's life *now*, and it avails nothing that there still may be left within the tree a hundred channels through which the sap *used* to run; it is as dead as though these had never been. So, likewise, it is true that a religious institution, no matter how ancient be the history of its growth, is dead if it cannot give free course to the fresh currents which rise out of the ground of contemporary life. But that is not all. The vitality of the tree is in its outermost circumference: true enough. But does this mean that the heart of the trunk is of no more consequence? Does it mean that all

the wood of earlier growth might be chiselled away within, and the tree, if only its sap were still running, remain as sturdy as before? Let one big wind blow, and the answer would be plain enough. Lacking the old centre of its strength, the tree goes down demolished.

So is it also with religious institutions. The disused forms of thought of yesterday, the channels through which there moved conceptions no longer congenial to our modern minds, are not lightly separable from the life of today. Contemporary thinking need not run through them now; but back of the thin margin of our present experience, their record of the agelong life which has moved through many forms, lies, like the heart of the oak, to make faith sturdier today. A living sapling may be a better thing than some dead giant of the forest; but it is well that we should make sure the giant is dead before transferring our affections to the sapling. In the which there is a simile to help shape our judgment when we watch individual leaders and groups of zealous people, forgetful of the long perspective of the centuries, proceeding to plant and fashion new churches with hasty satisfaction which has not stopped to reckon whether these seedlings, in present dignity or in strength to

stand the winds of the testing years, can achieve the significance of those historic institutions of Christianity which they would fain supplant.

Yet separations will continue unless it be made plain that there is room in the Christian Church for the independents. Multitudes of men and women today do not easily confine themselves within the limits of old forms. They find their intellectual freedom chafed by what they regard as the rigidity of creeds. They are like the Gentiles, against the too wooden treatment of whom Peter protested in Jerusalem when he said, "Why should ye put a yoke upon the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" It would be a grievous thing if by narrowness of interpretation or by stubborn particularism of old ideas the Church should exclude from its communion the most eager and most prophetic spirits of our time. The mightiest tree will ultimately die and give way to new plantings of life; but the historic Church may transcend that simile and become a vast, far-branching thing which need never die, if only it has the wisdom to graft into itself every new expression of true creative life.

In the wideness of the Christian fellowship,

there ought not to be any ultimate conflict between the man of the independent mind and the man who loves the institution. For the Christian Church, as Jesus Christ himself instituted it, was no thing of rigid precedents. It is the company of all those who truly are seeking God in the light of his desire. All the forms which have come to seem characteristic of the institution have a value which may be great yet always is subordinate to something which is greater still. Creedal formulas and articles of theology and ideas as to the proper constitution of the ministry, have their historic place in the well-being of the Church; but Jesus never made them central. What he did make central is the attraction of a life like his in all the centuries straight down from the beginning. It is that alone which has made the Church a shining thing. The wranglings of men in the great councils which shaped the creeds did not make the real greatness of the Church. Inquisitors who burned the heretics for the glory of God did not make her great. But what has made the Church great and can make it irresistible today is the fellowship of ardent spirits who may have their different ideas, yet have the same love of Jesus Christ and so belong together in the

great organization whose business it is to serve him. Does anyone suppose that it would make much difference in the estimation of Jesus that Savonarola's ecclesiastical ideas were very different from Martin Luther's and Francis of Assisi's very different from those of John Wesley, or John Henry Newman's different from those of Phillips Brooks? Does anyone suppose that it would matter to Jesus that some men in Presbyterian pulpits find the Westminster Confession congenial and others do not? Does anyone suppose that he holds in high importance the precise definitions which Bishops set forth in Pastoral Letters, and is disturbed that other men who love him find these an impossible framework for their minds? The closer adjustment of ideas may come in time; but meanwhile, who can deny that the will of Jesus Christ must be that the gates of the Church should be open in many directions for the entrance of all those who want to give their lives to him?

CHAPTER V

THE SIMPLICITIES OF CHRIST

"THOSE who want to give their lives to him." Is that, then, actually the test for discipleship of Jesus? May it be that Christians, and especially the organized Christian Church, has laid too much stress upon dogmas and definitions, and too little upon devotion? Is the real genius of Christianity a simpler thing than many have been led to think?

These questions have value for both classes of people who may have an interest in Christianity. There are those who are interested because they belong to the Christian Church. It might be assumed that they realize without further consideration what the Church is and what it stands for. But, as a matter of fact, some of the people who have the dullest and dreariest and altogether most misleading notions of the Church are those who have belonged to it all their lives. They understand ecclesiastical associations, but they do not un-

derstand the Church. An English writer has recently published a little book which he calls *The Lost Radiance of the Christian Religion,* and for many well-meaning members of congregations there is a lost radiance of the Christian Church. The central light of it is befogged in an atmosphere filled with the dust of all sorts of accidental ideas. We need to clear the air, so that the fresh simplicity of the Church's unclouded meaning may shine upon us like the morning sun.

Then, on the other hand, there are people outside the Church who would be interested if they should know what the Church really is. I hope that among the readers of this book there may be those who frankly are critics of the Church. I hope there are some who have no use for the Church and think the Church has no worth for them. It is to them —or to *you*—especially that I write the words which follow. I honor your difficulties. If the Church really were the thing which some of you think it is, then there are many inside it who would be standing with you outside its gates. But if the Church is a greater and more glorious fact than you have ever imagined, more real, more simple, and more commanding, then the question is certainly coming

home to you, and I would press it as directly as I may—whether your life can express its highest possibilities until you take up the challenge which the Church presents.

What *is* the Christian Church then? What is the heart-beat of its essential life, in the strength of which alone its outward embodiment can endure?

For answer to that question, I like to turn back to this picture which the Gospel of Matthew, with swift, clear words, has painted unforgetably:

"Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

"Follow me," said Jesus,—and to whom did he say it? To men who had exactly the same sort of reasons, neither more nor less, for heeding him which you and I may have today. He was talking to four men who were busy making their living. He had a fellowship which he wanted them to enter. He wanted them to come and let him talk to them, to teach them his conception of the worth of life, to link them with an adventure of service

to which he was about to commit himself. So he called to them, and with a very simple instinct these four men, James, John, Peter, and Andrew, responded. They were drawn to him. That was all there was to it. They liked him so much that his invitation stirred them. They did not in the least know all that it was going to mean; but they wanted to find out. This extraordinary person standing there before them, Jesus of Nazareth, said "Come." And so they came.

That day the Christian Church began. I know you will not read exactly that in Church histories. You will not find that even set forth in the Prayer Book. You will hear that the Church began on Pentecost, when people began to be baptized. You will hear it spoken of as though it was never recognized until it had sacraments, and definite ways of worship, and a formal organization, and all the other outward marks of the Church as it has grown into an institution. All that may be true enough; but it is also true, and it is a much more important truth, that the inmost life of the Church was born that day when Jesus called the first men to go with him. Human lives rallying round the highest life, human souls beginning to be conformed to the soul of

Jesus, learners from him that presently they might be leaveners of his world—*there* was the genius of the Church.

Consider now more specifically the marks of the Church.

I

In the first place, there was allegiance to a person.

What did Jesus say to James and John and to the others? Did he say, "Come now, sit down and let me inquire about your orthodoxy?" Did he say, "John, what are your views as to the authorship of the Pentateuch?" "James, what are your views as to the verbal inspiration of the Old Testament generally?" "Peter, are you persuaded that after a while, when the Church shall be organized, you will have a sufficiently correct and unbending idea of Apostolic Succession?" "Andrew, will you be ready to keep out of the Church every one whose views you do not think to be correctly stated?" Did he ask all of them what definitions they had about God, what they thought the Incarnation meant, whether they agreed with the phrases which one of these days were going to be written down in the Nicene

Creed? Well, if he asked them anything like that, the Gospels have certainly omitted to mention it. All that they have told us that he said was just that one invitation, "Follow me." In the Gospel of John, we are told that he said once, "I am the truth." In effect, that was what he said to the four men whom he first invited. "Come live with me; come learn of me; and you will find out what you need to know." Personal loyalty that should grow into love, personal affiliation that should widen out into an infinite understanding,—this was all that he asked that day.

I know that all this may seem so simple that some may wonder why it should be stated at all. Yet the simple things are precisely the ones which often we do not see. We gaze at our own elaborations, which seem so much more impressive; we think that we honor the living fact by decorating it with all sorts of costly and ingenious definition; and in the end we only succeed in burying it so deep that we lose the vital contact with it altogether. In some of the Roman Catholic cathedrals and churches of the old world, we may see statues of the infant Christ by the erection of which a poor, groping worship has tried to symbolize its homage for its Lord. It has not been

content even with the statue itself, but it has gone on to deck it out in stiff brocaded silks and crowns and great flashy jewels; so that there is a wide, wide gap between that pathetic, gaudy doll and the simplicity of Jesus. In the Holy Land, the spot which is supposed to be the ground of the manger where Mary's child was laid, and the rock which is supposed to be the place of crucifixion, alike are buried and hidden beneath over-decorated shrines. None of the poignant genuineness of that holy ground is left. The effort to honor it has robbed it of its direct reality. So in the Christian Church in many ways the immediate presence of Jesus and all the marks of his living foot-steps are concealed by the ostentatious grandiosity which insists on speaking for him instead of letting his spirit speak for itself.

Nevertheless, he does speak for himself, and never more surely than today. Through the busy recitation of ecclesiastical offices, through all the well-meant clamor of men vociferating their creeds and chanting their liturgies, the directness of the voice of Jesus breaks. He is calling the awareness of men back to his own purpose, and then his great figure lifts itself quiet and commanding above the crowd. Is the Church listening to his in-

vitation? Is it making his message plain to the hearts of simple men? Is it teaching the world that the Church dare not mean less and never can mean more than this rallying of human lives into direct contact with the living fact of Jesus?

That test may mean a winnowing of the Church. The reason why a great many people are indifferent today to the Church is not because they are indifferent to Christ, but because they think the Church is. They think the Church knows very little of its Lord except his name. Sometimes there are considerations which make us wonder whether they are right. Jesus was the friend of the poor; but the Church is apt to be exceedingly solicitous for the rich. Jesus came with the passionate eagerness of his clear-eyed consecration to righteousness and truth, terrible to every sham convention that stood in his way; but the Church often seems less concerned for truth than it is for tradition, less eager to grapple with evil than it is anxious not to hurt the susceptibilities of comfortably-fed worshippers who might be disturbed. Jesus came as the most blazing idealist our earth has ever seen; yet a great many people in the Church will say, "Of course idealism is all very well,

you know, but the most important thing is to be practical." "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God," he said, and he meant it; but it would often seem as though the members of the Church were diligently seeking anything and everything else with their main energies, and seeking the Kingdom of God only as it may be set to music and pleasantly, but not too specifically, recommended once a week on Sunday morning. Jesus made religion a passionate reality, leaping, beautiful, and terrible, too, as fire and flame. But in the complacent let-well-enough alone program of many of our Churches, where are the souls on fire? Of how many church members is it possible to say: "In this man, in that woman, the living meaning of Christ is revealed for the world today?"

Well, that is the test the Church must meet. "Follow me," he said. It is not a question merely of following the very polite and pleasant conventions of a particular congregation. It is not a question merely of holding fast by the orthodox pronouncements of any ecclesiastical body. It is a question of relating ourselves to him. The one purpose of any Church and the only continuing reason for its glorious existence is that it may renew and

recreate upon a wider scale that same vital fellowship which those first disciples entered into when Jesus said to them, "Follow me."

In the light of that, all who belong to the Church must continually be testing their right to be called disciples of Christ. Preachers in the pulpit must ask themselves, and men from the pews have a right to ask of them, whether they preach certain formulations conventionally called Christian, or whether in truth they preach the living Christ. Those who are officers in the Church may be for that reason the more in danger of confusing appearance and fact. A vestryman, or an elder, or a deacon, may assume that he is a Christian because it is his business to be concerned with certain affairs which are administered in the name of Christ. People who help to build a church, or whose ancestors helped to build it, people who sit in pews which link them with Christian associations that reach back through many years, take it for granted that they, too, have a well authenticated Christian status. So they *may* have in very fact, but such it is equally possible that they may not have at all. There are words of Jesus which may be too easily forgotten:— "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the king-

dom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." "When once the master of the house is risen up and hath shut to the door, * * * then shall ye begin to say, 'We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.'"

If now there are those in the Church who need to revitalize their discipleship by the remembrance of what Christianity means, so also there are those outside the Church who ought to claim their discipleship upon the same account. It is a grievous thing when men are fenced off from the Church by barriers which ought never to have been erected. Creeds and theologies are the attempts to express the long consensus of the Church concerning the wonder of her Lord. They have their enduring place in the treasury of the Church's teaching; but they ought to be treated as the gifts which discipleship will inherit, not as narrow gates through which discipleship must be forced to pass. Here is the spiritual fact of the Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of the world today as clear as was that visible presence in Galilee long ago. What

answer do your hearts make to him?—*that* is the one decisive question which the Church ought to ask those who have not confessed his name. What desire stirs in you when you realize what Jesus Christ is like? Do you want to try to come more close to him? Do you feel your own souls rise up to acknowledge the ideal which he presents? Do you want to be pure with a purity like his? Do you want to be strong with strength like his? Do you want to share his trust in God and his faith in men? Do you want to ally yourself with some ideal of faithful service in the spirit of him who came to build God's kingdom here upon the earth? Do you believe that no possible blessing could come to your life equal to the blessing of having its thoughts and its purposes leavened by the mind of Christ, and do you sincerely want to make his mind your own? If you do, then come exactly as the first disciples came, answering the simple invitation of the Lord to men who are ready to draw near to him. Of a great deal that may be true of him, you may have very little glimmering at first. But what of that? Come, follow the impulse which you have. That is all the Church requires, for that is all that was required by her Lord.

I know that this is not a description of Christian discipleship which all will agree with. There are some who cannot be content with the method of their Lord. They will not receive men into the Church, they will not welcome them to confirmation or communion, unless they profess a thorough conformity with all the articles of the creeds. Against such a well-meant but tragically mistaken dogmatism, we need to proclaim the liberty of Christ. We shall not treat with irreverence anything in the precious heritage of those developed doctrines which the centuries have handed down. Everything that men have thought of Jesus Christ and every most exalted conception of him which they have enshrined in the statements of their faith have enduring worth. But they are not fixed burdens to be laid upon men's shoulders. They are beckonings to lead them on. This is what Christian saints and seers and all great souls, out of the deeps of their experience, have believed concerning Jesus, the Church should say. Not the letter of their formulas, but the amplitude of their faith, must be your inspiration. Ponder that teaching which the Church hands on to you. Ponder it very reverently, in order that your own wondering

imagination may be roused; but remember always that the only vital use of creeds and formulated doctrines is to inspire you to reproduce the spiritual experience to which they testify. Come into the presence of Jesus, and learn for yourself of him. Let your own growing experience create for you the personal conviction which shall help to illuminate the Church's creed.

II

We turn now to a further suggestion. Those words, "Follow me," meant first a personal allegiance. They meant, in the second place, a practical obedience. It was not only, "Come and listen to me," not only, "Come and sit still and learn of me." It was, "*Follow* me on the roads where I shall go." It meant, not simply one choice of passive dedication, but the continuing pursuit of an active life.

Whither was this obedience to lead?

In the first place, it led for a long time on what seemed very ordinary ways. Doubtless the disciples, when they began to think of Jesus—as they did—in terms of the old Jewish prophecies of a Messiah, began to look also in him for some dramatic expression of

Messianic power. They were affected, as the general crowd in Galilee were, by the old throbbing expectations which had echoed in the hearts of Israel through long centuries since the days when the prophets spoke. They thought Messiah would come as a mighty king and conqueror, and so, when they had commenced to believe that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had followed through so simple a choice at first, was destined to be the Messiah, they saw themselves in the imagination of a new glory. He would be enthroned presently, and they would sit upon thrones at his side. But the days passed, and there was no splendid dawning of the kingdom. There may have been a disappointed whispering, a bewildered questioning one of another, among the disciples. Had not John the Baptist himself been perplexed? Had he not sent a message to Jesus from his prison, asking Jesus whether really he were the Messiah after all? "Art thou he that should come," he said, "or look we for another?" It may be that the disciples remembered that, when they were following Jesus in their lowly ways. They went with him into very obscure villages and synagogues to preach. They went into humble houses where sick people were lying in need

of help. They went to the homely occasions of joy as well as of sorrow, to a marriage in Cana, to the dinner which Matthew the converted publican gave to Jesus in order that all his friends might see him. They walked with him among little children in the market-place. They went where the lame and halt and blind were gathered by the city-gates. How could any mighty transformation for the world come to pass out of interests so humble? Was this all that it was going to mean to follow him? No, that was not all it was going to mean, but it was a part and a most real part. To follow Jesus meant then, as it means now, often a walking on ways which outwardly furnish no inspiration and to which the inspiration must be brought by the spirit that is kindled within. When young people enter fully into the communion of the Church by baptism or confirmation, or when others first definitely take the step that commits them to the fellowship of Jesus, this is the first and not least difficult lesson they have to learn. They must be able to see the meaning of Jesus and to follow it along the common roads of every day. Here is some event of social rejoicing into which they must go as Christians, bringing the Christian witness that the best happi-

ness goes hand in hand with temperance and self-control. Here is some lonely friend who needs to be sought out and encouraged. Here are the sick who must be remembered and cheered. Here is some one in great sorrow, for whose sake the Christian must lay aside what otherwise would be pressing matters to go and bring the comradeship of sympathy. Here is the home which must be made sweeter by the little unremembered acts of kindness and of love. Here is the work that is to be made more honorable by the Christian faithfulness which daily is put into it. It is hard sometimes to see that any great issues come out of such seemingly small concerns, hard to believe that all the law and the prophets, all the will of God and all the glory of our human hope, hang upon such little things as these. Yet it is true, and Christian discipleship begins to reveal its deepest meaning when it remembers that every duty, however inconspicuous, and every opportunity, however commonplace, constitute the blessed road of obedience along which Jesus Christ is saying "Follow me."

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much," said Jesus

once, and those words of his are endlessly significant. If any desire to be fit for great responsibilities, they must prove their Christian quality in the small ones; and the hearts which have learned the daily lesson of faithfulness will not ultimately lack the harder and higher call. Those who read the Gospel record will perceive that the disciples were not always to stay in Galilee. At length they were to go up to Jerusalem and face the more conspicuous tests. They were to learn what Christlikeness meant in the quiet places, but they were to have a chance to prove it presently before the eyes of the world. And if today the Church is in earnest about the spirit of Jesus Christ, if its men and women are learning through the habit of their constant choice to love and to absorb his spirit, the time will come when they shall have a chance to express it in the wider ways.

Is there no need in our world today for those who are ready boldly to express the mind of Jesus? Christianity is not an easy-going matter. The times come when they who follow Jesus Christ must be ready to take up a cross. They must be willing to face the derision and hostility of that part of the world whose good opinion they might most naturally

seek. Jesus did that, and the servant is not greater than his Lord, nor the disciple more immune than his Master.

There are needed today the men and women, and especially the young men and women, who stand for Christlike ideals of self-mastery and of consecration in our social life. Since the war, we have been passing through a period when old standards have been lost among a restless confusion of new ideas. We need not be afraid for that. We need not disbelieve in the essential soundness of our young life for the present and for the future; but in order for that soundness to be vindicated, there is a call for spirits filled with the deliberate boldness of the mind of Christ, who openly and deliberately shall stand for a purity in thought and act which can shame and over-master the license of the careless. This will involve the deliberate refusal of individuals to follow the crowd. It will involve the temporary risk of misunderstanding, the sneers of the frivolous, the hostility of any whose advantage lies in evil. But victory for the best that there is and ought to be in our civilization will be attained when men and women who have ideals are not afraid to reveal them,

when those whose consciences condemn the easy and flippant disregard of law which is abroad today say so with their lips, regardless of its immediate consequences. "If thy right hand offend thee," said Jesus, "cut it off and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to enter into life maimed than, having two hands, to enter into hell fire." Does anyone imagine that his words are only an exaggerated metaphor? Does anyone think that hell-fire is an old-fashioned and discarded phrase? It is not. It is as new-fashioned and as terrible as life itself. He who touches human lives in any intimate ministry will know men and women for whom hell is no future theory, but a horrible, present fact. They are passing through hell now, and they will tell you so. But they do not need to tell you, for you can see it in their eyes. They are passing through the hell of bitterness and of desperate regret, the hell of estranged friendships, of broken homes, of violated love. Into that hell they went, perhaps, because of their own recklessness, or it may be, because into it they were drawn by another's sin; but whosoever the fault was, the road has often led through those reckless adventures in dissipation, and those flaunting liberties which people have called

their self-expression, but which day by day have let loose the forces of havoc. The fires of their hell have been lighted by the matches of the carelessness which they have dropped into the inflammable stuff of human passion, and the result is that the world which for them might have been beautiful has become a darkness and a horror. Until the bitter consequences have begun to appear, men and women will not welcome those who would hold them back from their dangerous desires. But if they are to be helped in time, they must be helped by those who have the Christian stamina to stand for righteousness through good report and ill, to plant the flags of their positive ideals in the midst of society, to stand by these, come what may, and to rally round them at length, the larger and larger number of those whom their clean courage has inspired.

I think that Christ is walking also today through our industrial life, and calling his disciples to follow him on a way that will not be easy. We are now in the midst of a period of great complacency. What we call conservatism, which may mean merely the keeping of our class on top, is in the ascendant. The sword of Christian conscience may be

sheathed in the soft wrappings of a profitable contentment with things as they are. There was made one day an argument on behalf of the building of a great Cathedral by one who did not in the least intend the implication which his words carried, and yet which was dreadful in its possibility of mistake. He said: "Go to the men who command great wealth, either in their own right or through the trust funds which they administer. Tell them that the Cathedral and the presence of the religion which it symbolizes is the guarantee of the continuance of a social order on which their prosperity depends. Tell them that religion is the insurance of their prosperity, and ask them whether they think they are paying enough for their insurance." That, all unintended though it was, was a dreadful abnegation of the glory of Christianity in our modern world. The Church is not here to be the porter at the door of any citadel of vested interests. It is not here to defend things as they are, but to make things progressively what they ought to be. It is here to maintain its prophetic freedom, to rebuke evil wherever it may appear. It is here to defend men, not money. And if the Church has lost power over the imagination of many earnest people

now, the reason is because the Church has often not been the first to see our industrial evils and to challenge them—not the first, for example, to try to set little children free from mills and factories, not the first to try to take the grip of corrupt business alliances from the politics of city and nation, not always the most sensitive to see and the boldest to proclaim the authority of the values of Jesus in the midst of our economic and industrial life. Leaders in the Church like Bishop Spalding and Bishop Williams of Michigan were not welcome everywhere. They were too radical, men said, and too disturbing. That was what men said about Jesus. That was why they crucified him. And when he says to the leaders of the Church today, whether ministers or laymen, "Follow me," they need not be amazed if somewhere along their road a moral Calvary may wait for them to climb.

Once again, and finally, the feet of Jesus are walking on the road that leads to the destruction of war. Men hated him in Judaea for various causes, but most bitterly of all for this: that he did not measure up to their definition of the patriot. He was about to break up, with that wide human sympathy of his,

their power to forge the loyalty of their own people with the hammers of hate. He would not say with them: "Israel. May she always be right; but, right or wrong, God's chosen Israel." He staked his ministry on forces which to them seemed ridiculous, upon the leaven of human understanding, upon the power of human brotherhood, upon the invincible might at length of the love of God expressed in human service. So they put him to death. They said, "This fellow betrayeth the nation." They could not understand the glory of God's far-reaching purposes as these were revealed in him.

Still the vision tarries, though now, within this twentieth century, it brightens with the dawn. A growing company is arising everywhere, not the seers and prophets and great men only, but humble men out of the crowd, who believe that there is power and victory in Jesus' faith of a world builded, not in force, but in justice and organized good-will. It is not popular yet to proclaim faith in that. Men preach the old vehement blood and thunder, pride and hate, and call it patriotism, and rouse the passions of the crowd. Men speak of peace, and their associates wonder if they are not a little queer and subtly danger-

ous. Nevertheless, the future is in the hands of those who dare to follow the way of Jesus. Our worldwide civilization can be saved today and lifted into new certainty of life if the tremendous power of the Christian Church makes plain to our public men that henceforth it will never again allow itself to be brought into the position of blessing another war.

In the last paragraph of President Coolidge's inaugural speech in 1925, there was this sentence: "The legions which America sends are armed, not with the sword, but with the cross." That must be, not a phrase alone, but a prophecy for the future. Today the voice of Jesus is calling upon the Christian Church to go with him upon that crusade to abolish war which summons up all our resources and summons them now. It summons our practical judgment to find, and to compel legislative representatives to adopt, those means which will organize our international intelligence and consolidate our international conscience towards the prevention of war. It calls for a spiritual victory over the passions in ourselves. It may call in future for the crucifixion of those who are determined henceforth to let no will of crowd or government, or of any other thing less than the mind of Christ,

determine their final attitude. No man can look into his brother's heart; but the eyes of Christ look into the hearts of us all. It is with him that we must make our final reckoning, and in the great tasks which confront our world today, he speaks to us his simple challenge, *"Follow me."*

CHAPTER VI

THE FORMIDABLENESS OF CHRIST

THE final words of the preceding chapter may well strike again the theme of this one,—"*Follow me.*" But that theme is to be pursued now with a difference. Men followed Jesus first because they loved him. His purpose wooed them. His attraction won them. But something tremendous in his spiritual authority also commanded them. He, and the religion which they learned from him, were infinitely lovable; but they were very formidable, too.

The formidableness of Christianity. To some of us that will be a new idea. We are not accustomed to thinking of Christianity as formidable. In these times there is a tendency rather to think of it as a failure. There are many who are timid and distressed concerning Christianity. There are others who are condescending about it. To them it seems that the hard forces of our materialistic age may

be about to extinguish the spiritual dream which belonged to other centuries, now looked back to as the ages of faith. Was Jesus, after all, a visionary whom a practical generation cannot follow? And is the dream of the Kingdom of God only a lovely irridescent bubble to be shattered against the stark facts of our modern world? These questions are being asked, and in the face of them some of the disciples of Christianity are afraid.

But listen to Jesus. He told one day his parable of the vineyard. According to that parable, the Master of the vineyard had let it to certain husbandmen to cultivate for him. When the time came for them to give him of the fruit of the vineyard, he sent his servants. But the men who held the vineyard reviled them, beat them, and sent them away empty. At length the Master of the vineyard sent his own son; and when they saw him coming, they reasoned among themselves, saying, "This is the heir. Come let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours." They did therefore kill him, but they did not gain their ends. They themselves at last were miserably cast out, and destroyed. That is the parable, very plain, and very stern, and at the end of it Jesus spoke these words: "The stone which the

builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner. Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

The men who listened to Jesus that day had no doubt as to what he meant, and neither need we. The ultimate reality in this world of ours, he taught, is God. All that we hold, we hold in trust for Him. To Him we owe the tribute of our lives. To us He sends His messengers, and to us He has sent the supreme representative of Himself in the person of Jesus. Men may rise against that challenge of God, as embodied in the presence of Jesus. They may try to repel it, to kill it, to fling it away; but that will not be the end. There is no escaping the ultimate spiritual authority. If any would destroy the message of God, they work their own destruction. If any will not make God's purpose the foundation-stone for all their living, then the stone becomes an avalanche grinding them to powder beneath its awful weight. That is a gigantic thing to claim. We may believe it or deny it; but no triviality of mood is left when once we have felt the staggering impact of all that it implies. That message of the relationship of God

and man which we call Christianity, speaks with commanding voice.

In Jesus always there was an assertion of power which dismayed those who opposed him and thrilled the men who loved him. We can watch it back in the beginning of his ministry, on that day, for example, when he went on a Sabbath day into the Synagogue in his own town of Nazareth. The neighbors there were disposed to regard him casually, or at best with a sort of good-humored patronage. But when he stood up before them, he read the mighty prophecy from Isaiah of him who should have the Spirit of the Lord upon him because he had come to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. Here was the message of Israel's long dream of the supreme deliverer, and very quietly, yet with absolute assurance, Jesus said that in him the fulfilment of that dream would come. Turn to the Sermon on the Mount and look how the authority of Jesus lifts itself there, high and overshadowing, like some majestic mountain peak above the little summits of the utmost which men had said before. Here on one level he places the sayings of the great teachers of old, even of Moses himself, and above these in serene contrast he dares to proclaim a new

and transcending Gospel. He said to his disciples that, though they might have lost all things in this world, they should receive a hundred-fold again in that final awarding which his hands controlled. He looked at Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives and identified the destiny of the Holy City with its reception or its rejection of himself. Quiet and undaunted, he stood in the hall of Pilate, and to the bewildered Roman, asking him, "Art thou a king then?" he answered, "Thou sayest it." Before the High Priest, his spirit flamed into magnificent proclamation of his coming victory. When they asked him, "Art thou the Christ? Tell us," he answered, "Hereafter shall the Son of Man sit on the right hand of the power of God." When to his disciples he spoke the parable of the judgment, he said no less than this, that the destiny of men's souls forever would be determined by the way in which they recognized or failed to recognize the chance to love and serve his spirit in the least of men. Not only for time but for eternity that revelation of the meaning of God which he had expressed, should hold the verdict of spiritual life or death. He would be the foundation-stone of all true building; but that same rock of his authority,

if it were denied, should become for men the instrument of their final doom.

All this is the more impressive when we link with it also the thought of the gentleness of Jesus. The way in which he magnified his message is the more overwhelming because he never in our little human sense magnified himself. He walked in intimacy of human sympathy with the least and poorest of those who needed him. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and on the night when he was to institute the sacrament of his divinest meaning for his disciples, he took a basin of water and washed those same disciples' feet. They said he was the friend of sinners and so he was. Yet it was the same Jesus, so loving, so self-forgetful, so nobly indifferent to any personal pride, who proclaimed in such absolute terms the life and death authority of that spirit which he represented. In what we have called the formidableness of his message there was no faintest tinge of that angered superiority which creeps like a stain into all our ordinary human judgments. On the contrary, the thing that made his judgment terrible was the white flame of that unselfish love into which no smoke nor passion of personal littleness ever entered.

Men listened to him and knew then, and we remember his words and know now, that through the transparency of his spirit the absolute realities of God were shining with a light which no human conscience could evade.

Look now at what actually has happened. One day as the evening fell and the lights glimmered in the courts of the temple, Jesus sat upon the Mount of Olives and looked at Jerusalem, lifted proudly upon her holy hills. In the minds of the men who ruled Jerusalem in that day there was little recognition that those quiet brooding eyes of that solitary figure had any significance there that night. They would have laughed at the idea that he could express a condemnation which they needed to fear. They would have scorned that idea the more completely when a few days later they were to take this man of Nazareth and crucify him outside the city gates. They thought they disposed of him once for all that day. They did destroy his body. There in the silence of a cruel death they stilled his voice. So at least they thought; but through him the awful realities of the spirit moved unswervingly on. Gazing upon Jerusalem that night from the Mount of Olives, his far-seeing eyes had looked past

her momentary power into the disasters coming dark-winged down the years. The heart of his great love wept over Jerusalem, knowing that if it rejected him it should seal its own rejection. No self-pity nor any shadow of concern for his own vindication were in his spirit. To the mothers of Jerusalem he said, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." In the clairvoyance of the love whose vision was warped by no self-consciousness whatever, he saw the destinies of life laid bare in the light of the moral certitudes of God. Jerusalem, which would not accept the foundation stone of new life through him, would be ground beneath the spiritual impact of that stone which they refused. And we who look back see now the truth of what Jesus prophesied. Not only the city, but all the civilization which it represented, was presently to be destroyed. It had refused the inspiration which might have made it fit to live, and so the vast balances of God weighed it, found it wanting, and cast it into dust.

At the same time when Jesus looked upon Jerusalem, a mightier empire occupied the centre of his world. Rome, which men called the "Eternal City," seemed invincible

in her dominion. Of what consequence against the power of her legions were the ideas of the little company of obscure provincials who began to call themselves the Christian Church? Yet men and women looking at Rome and weighing it according to the judgments of Jesus, began to see that it must fall. In the Book of Revelation there flame even yet the passionate fires of men's old conviction that the tyranny and the cruel selfishness of the Roman Empire came into collision with the moral purposes of God, and in that collision Rome, like Babylon, irretrievably should fall. And Rome did fall. The empire crumbled and disappeared; but past its disappearance the moral energies that had been incarnated in Jesus moved on to fashion another civilization in its place.

Nor has it been only against those forces which have overtly rejected him that the spirit of Jesus Christ has been a formidable and in the end a destroying thing. Equally it can bring its doom to institutions which confess his name but deny his spirit, which call him "Lord, Lord," but do not the things which he says. The Catholic Church of the Middle Ages, for example, was built in the name of Jesus, but more and more it rejected

the spirit of Jesus as its foundation stone. It tried to build instead on worldly ambition, upon material power and shrewd alliances with the empires of force and fraud, until at last the very stone which it had rejected became the instrument of its condemnation, and men saw that the Church which claimed the name of Jesus was none of his. The desire to find again the simplicity of Jesus, the hunger for a religion of moral reality waking in the hearts of the common men of Europe, smote upon the solidarity of the old Church and broke it into the fragments out of which the free churches of our western world were to be established.

Unchangingly that power of Christianity is moving through the centuries. Indestructible in its spiritual energy as is that energy of our physical universe,—no fraction of which, the scientists tell us, is ever destroyed,—it pours itself into new channels, and shatters and overflows them if these through sin or through stupidity become blockaded. It runs like a mighty river, fertilizing great provinces of life, but gathering itself into floods and mighty torrents, which can carve its canyons through every wall of men's resistance. It can come to life with infinite fruitfulness, but with

great formidableness, too. To our own inexorable cost we may deny it, but we cannot *defy* it, when the last balances of reality are struck. *It* is not in danger, but we may be in danger. If we resist that which may be to us the power of life, it may become to us the silent but certain power of our death.

To focus this thought into its definite meaning, let us take three phases of our present life and set them in its light.

1. In the first place, there is the question of what is destined to happen to those classes in our society which at present are the privileged. It is only the truth to say that many of those who have most, show the least sense of responsibility in its possession. In this century, with the unprecedented amount of accumulated wealth which the age of machinery and high-speed production have made possible, there is a growing class of those who take prosperity for granted. They have no first-hand conception of the human cost in labor and bitterness by which the huge car of our modern civilization, on the gilded top of which they ride, is dragged along its road by the multitude of toilers. Boys and girls are beginning to assume as a matter of course that they should go to school and college, not be-

cause they may have any particular purpose or serious work in view, but because they think four years of a good time is coming to them on that general current of privilege whose business it is to set in their direction. They are like players sitting at the game of life with dice loaded always to their advantage, and though at first their spirit may be simply that of a debonair enjoyment, it can become by very subtle degrees that of a more and more calculating and arrogant superiority. It is not easy for those to whom everything comes without effort to keep simplicity of thought, humility of spirit, and a fine sense of responsible honor to obligations larger than themselves. Nor is it easy for those whose life is a daily practice of taking much and giving little, to keep that enlargement of spirit which is the only gateway into the beautiful spaciousness of religion. It is an interesting fact that in a very thorough effort recently made among the students of one of our great western universities to discover their religious loyalties, it was found that the highest percentage of religious conviction and attachment was among those students who had to work their way through college, the next among those who had no great luxuries yet were sufficiently

supported by their parents so that they did not have to work, and the least percentage of all among those who had in college large allowances which enabled them to do irresponsibly as they pleased. There is a high seriousness in the Christian conception of life as a trust to be nobly fulfilled in the name of God, which is not readily attained by those to whom nothing comes as a responsible trust, but merely as the material for trivial inclination to do with as it will.

The danger of our age is that those in whose keeping rests the possibility of leadership may prove unworthy of their chance. If that happens, then all the most certain forces of our universe will slowly gather for their overthrow. Neither biologically nor spiritually considered can the human race long tolerate as the advance guard of its privileges those who have become too indifferent, too selfish, or too cynical to lead. In all the dim ages of our human evolution, the instinct within the race has been pushing forward constantly toward those larger and finer experiments of life which blossom in developed species or in individuals of extraordinary type. Now that the race from those dim beginnings has risen to self-consciousness, the impulse to progress

must be not only instinctive, but intelligent. Civilization can go forward only as those to whom much is given remember that of them shall much be required. And if the men and women who possess great privilege refuse to use it worthily, if wealth and education and social refinement produce nothing but a froth of self-indulgence and clever ideas with no deep conviction nor consecrated purpose, then one of two grave things will happen.

The first possibility is that the great mass of men at the bottom, angered and disgusted beyond endurance at the cruel indifference of those at the top, may overturn the whole social order in a great upheaval of destroying hatred, plunging the entire life of the nation into muddy chaos, but determined at any cost to pull down and to submerge those who formerly had enjoyed that sunlight and spaciousness of life which they had been denied. We have seen that take place before our eyes in Russia. The Czar, who ten years ago was the most unquestioned autocrat in the western world, was shot to death with all his family in the wretched cellar of the prison of his exile. And not only the little group of the nobility which gathered round him, but the entire social class of the educated and the

privileged, were dragged down to ruin with him; and the rule of the raw proletariat takes the place of those who had been supposed by long generations to be fit for the people's leadership. This which has happened in Russia is one alternative possibility of what may happen in other lands, including conceivably even our own.

There is also a second possibility. In countries like ours, where the gulf between the classes is not so great, the ideas of those at the top may slowly permeate the great body of the people. We see that taking place today in such small but significant matters as the way in which multitudes of girls of the wage-earning group may imitate the more shallow fashions of their privileged sisters; and we see it in that slovenly indifference of workmanship too widely characteristic of organized labor, which is simply a reflection among the men who work with their hands of that same concern for their own profits, and that indifference to the general welfare, which they have seen in many of those who have inherited and enjoyed idle wealth. Through the whole life of the nation there can run a subtle disintegration of its spirit when people lose that sense of life as a trust from God which Jesus

taught, and imagine instead that gain can come out of a godless pursuit of selfish interests, with no idea whatever of human life organized according to the larger friendliness of Jesus. They may suppose that this civilization which is ours now, and which we presumably shall pass on to our children tomorrow, can live with nothing better to hold it together than the cynical disbeliefs, the languid self-indulgence, and the half-disguised paganism which is all that some of us who claim to be its leaders are giving it now. But the retribution of moral realities is a deadly thing. No matter how imposing may be the gilded fabric of our life, if once the cornerstone of that fundamental conception of what life means which Jesus furnishes is rejected, the whole mass will come down in human ruin. No nation can endure which is taught from the top and is learning through all its classes to shirk responsibility, to flout with flippant disrespect the dignity of law, and to preach and practice an undisciplined individualism instead of that noble co-operation by which alone great societies can be built. The principles of Jesus will not be defied. Life as a holy trust from God, the relationship of men as brethren through the consciousness of

their Father's purpose in them all, the Kingdom of God as the high ideal to which all every-day work must be made to contribute,—these are the living foundation-stones on which our life can securely rest; and without these all our boasted strength and pride will ultimately go down into the dust.

2. In the second place, there is that aspect of our life which has to do with the relation of nations one to another. We have referred to that already in considering examples of the past. We may well think of it again as we look to the tendencies of the future.

When this nation of ours was founded, it was founded by men of ideals. Religion shaped the purposes of the men of Jamestown and the men of Massachusetts. Their spirit was like that which is quaintly written concerning Harvard College in the old chronicle entitled *New England's First Fruits.*

"After God had carried us safe to New England, and wee had builded our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, reard convenient places for God's worship and setled the civill government, one of the next things we longed for and looked after was to advance learning and perpetuate it to posterity, dreading to leave an illiterate ministery to the Churches when our present ministers shall lie in the dust."

As far as they knew how, they tried to make the purpose of God, as Christianity had taught them to conceive it, the foundation on which their achievements should rest.

We live now in a larger and more complex world. We live also in a time when the implications of Christianity are more clearly understood than they were by men three hundred years ago. It is a thrilling fact of our century that never have the words and ideals of Jesus shone upon the imaginations of men with a more revealing light than they do now. We have entered more deeply than our fathers into the meaning of the Kingdom of God. We have seen that the gospel is not only an individual, but also a social message, and that all our widest human relationships must be ordered according to the ideals of Jesus if Christianity is to be made real. Our knowledge is beginning to be sufficient. The question is as to whether we shall have the spiritual power to carry our knowledge into action. For religion will not be allowed without opposition to lay hold upon our national and international affairs. There are many who say that these are the realm of practical politics with which religion has nothing to do. They deliberately assert that the relation of

one nation to another is not governed by any moral or ideal considerations, but rather by the blind pressure of economic necessity, by trade rivalries which know no other law than the survival of the strong, and by the old untamed instinct of survival which makes might the only final right. Europe for a long time was full of that philosophy, and in its witch's cauldron it brewed the war. We used to think that in America we were relatively free from it. We thought that we were conspicuous in the world as a friendly and pacific nation, depending for our greatness not upon vast armaments, but upon the compelling ideals of that confident life which we were developing here. Much of that old instinct of the real America is in us still; but against it there is rising another influence. We have drunk too deep both of power and of riches after the great war for our spirit to be quite as simple as it was before. From the comradeship of the war years we withdrew into our isolation, and with a larger army and a vastly more powerful navy than we have ever had before, we are beginning to suppose that upon this wealth and power of ours, our dominance among the nations can be established. But the awful influence of the Crucified is still

a fact to control the destinies of men. We cannot make our own spirit content to follow a policy of armed selfishness. Neither we nor any other nation can defy that instinct of human solidarity which the spirit of Jesus has put into the hearts of men. The peoples of this earth must work out their mutual needs with him, for without him they will be destroyed. When the rulers of the nations understand that in this universe of ours, ideas are more powerful than things, that the desire of the human spirit for life and peace and joy which can bring men together, is more important than the shrewd little advantages for which so-called statesmen snatch and plunder in their diplomatic games, when they learn that the business of our leaders is to lift the peoples above the plane of the struggle of the brute into that organized and intelligent co-operation which befits the family of the sons of God,—then our civilization will be built upon the living stone of the meaning of Jesus Christ; and if we reject or forget that foundation, we do it at our mortal peril.

3. Finally, the words of Jesus concern our estimate of the Church. Here, surely, it ought to be plain that the spirit of Jesus must be the foundation of everything which we at-

tempt to build. Yet as a matter of fact we know that often it is not. Instead of the spirit of Jesus, the Church is prone to substitute all sorts of other things,—old dogmas concerning secondary matters, brittle prejudices left from the theological strife of other years, divisive sectarianism and narrow ecclesiastical pride. Against a Church built on these things, that instinctive recognition of the meaning of Jesus which shapes itself in the heart of the common man, becomes a weapon of repudiation. Those ideals of Jesus which the Church is supposed to express are the heart of her power when she is obedient to express them; but the inner forces gather dreadfully for her destruction if her sins or her stupidities put barriers in their way. Fire within the engine, and steam within the boilers, are the living energy of the machine which uses them, but when they are clogged and denied their outlet, they will tear the thing that holds them into fragments. The electric current conveys its instant miracle of light and power; but let the open channels which convey it become short-circuited, and it becomes a scorching and destroying flame. So the spirit of Jesus working through his Church, can make it the one supreme instrument for the redemption of our

human life. But if the Church obstructs that spirit, barricades it with our stupid literalisms, smothers it in our smug conventions, then the spirit will pass from the smitten body of the Church to find its free course in other ways. What is the Church doing to bring the mind of Jesus to bear upon all the actual issues of our modern life? What is the Church doing to show that nothing in our civilization is built securely unless it is built upon the foundation of the purposes of Jesus? If the Church removes that foundation from beneath her own conception of her life, then no matter how ostentatious be her seeming fabric, it will go down into ruinous disaster.

Here, then, there stand again the solemn words of the formidableness of Christianity. "Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." No man, no nation, and no Church can defy the ultimate authority of those realities of the spirit which Jesus has revealed.

Yet, on the other hand, there shines the positive proclamation, "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner." Chattering voices of disbelief may imagine that the ideals of Jesus do not

count; the little blindness of a short-sighted irreligion may think that it does not matter whether or not life rests upon the great certitudes of God; but deeper than any questioning, abides the eternal fact that upon the truth of life as it is in Jesus, all our hopes for permanent achievement must be built. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

CHAPTER VII

THE GLADNESS OF CHRIST

THE gladness of Christ would seem at first hearing to be a subject as far removed as possible from his formidableness, but the two conceptions are alike at least in this,—that men have often been as unaware of one as of the other.

Certainly, there have been times when few remembered Christ as glad, and next to none associated gladness with their Christianity. On the contrary, to be much engaged in cheerful matters was reckoned as next door to irreligion. That extraordinary exemplar of early American Puritanism, Cotton Mather, in his *Magnalia,* recorded this sentence which his brother Nathan wrote as he contemplated his boyhood: "Of the manifold sins which I was then guilty of, none so sticks upon me as that, being very young, I was whitling on the Sabbath-day, and for fear of being seen, I did it behind the door. A great reproach of God!

a specimen of that atheism that I brought into the world with me." In Connecticut, in 1670, two lovers, John Lewis and Sarah Chapman, were tried "for sitting together on the Lord's Day under an apple tree in Goodman Chapman's orchard." In Plymouth, in 1658, one James Watt had been publicly reproved "for writing a note about common business on the Lord's Day, at least in the evening somewhat too soon," and in 1659, Sam Clarke, "for hankering about on men's gates on Sabbath evening to draw company," was reproved and warned not to "harden his neck," and be "wholly destroyed."

Nor is the spirit of these curious old judgments so remote as might be imagined. It was less than a generation ago that a young minister, just graduated from the theological seminary and keen for his work, was called to a little church in a remote country district of northern New England. The church stood near the shore of a lake, and the house at which he boarded was on the opposite shore. One Sunday in midwinter, when the ruts in all the roads were deep, the lake lay frozen from side to side with clean, smooth ice. So the minister got out his skates, and skated across to church. When he arrived he was

confronted with an assemblage of dour parishioners, scandalized at this unorthodox manner of his arrival. The elders, with ecclesiastical consciences bleak as the frozen hills, held a conference to determine what judgment should be passed on this fledgling minister of theirs. And from their conference they emerged with this remarkable verdict: that if he skated across the lake because he thought he might not get to church on time in any other way, he was pardonable; but if he skated because he enjoyed it, he had profaned the Sabbath, and raised grave doubts as to whether he was fit to be the minister of a godly congregation.

Against undue lightsomeness on the Sabbath, particularly, the frowns of the religious thus were directed, since the Sabbath was preeminently the "Lord's Day." But upon all days and seasons the austere shadow rested. One may perceive that unforgetably in John Bunyan's great classic, *Pilgrim's Progress,* wherein the Christian who would make his way to salvation must turn his back once-for-all and completely upon the City of Destruction, which is the life and fellowship of this present world.

That deep strain of influence which *Pil-*

grim's Progress represents has powerfully affected the American consciousness not only in New England but wherever else the Calvinistic theology and the Puritan conception of life have gone. In that influence there was great nobility. It represented a magnificent virility of choice and conduct, a moral yea and nay too mightily in earnest to palter with enervating things. Life was a high and holy business, to be held in right relation to august realities. In the face of eternity, the transitory pleasures of this fleeting world seemed to the Calvinistic conscience to be mere beguiling vistas to tempt men's souls from the strait, stern road of Life.

> "Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
> Pilgrim through this barren land"—

men prayed.

Pilgrims they were; and it did not trouble them that it was their own stern preoccupation which made a barrenness of earth's pleasant land through which they went.

Every great expression of the human spirit needs to be understood in relation to the conditions which called it forth. The mood of Calvinism was stern, but so were the times

which bred it. A century which held the Diet of Worms, the papal bulls of excommunication against the heretics of the Reformation, the Huguenot wars and the massacre of St. Bartholomew, was no time when men of purpose were like to look upon life debonairly. Those who were determined to maintain the freedom of their consciences and the integrity of their souls had to gird themselves for combat unto blood and death. In an age when men must be militant, the softer and sweeter values of the world must suffer. There is a stripping for action of the soul, as well as of the body, in which the more gracious aspects of life must be sacrificed; and in the face of high necessity, the sacrifice becomes a virtue. Against the background of all the facts, one may clearly perceive, in spite of all their harshness, the essentially heroic quality in the Calvinist and the Puritan.

But it is often the case that religious tradition perpetuates the outward aspect, which the dullest can imitate, rather than the inner spirit, of a great religious mood. It is easier to copy the Puritan's frown than to recapture his ennobling inner seriousness; easier upon occasions to wear his black cloak than to carry anew the high look of his eyes. So it comes

about that many persons have the idea that religion is fundamentally antagonistic to gladness, and that even a rudimentary Christian should know that it is proper to go sombrely through this vale of tears.

Yet against this conception—and misconception—of Christianity, arising as it did out of confused reversion to Old Testament rather than to New Testament standards in centuries when men's theologies were being fashioned in the midst of danger and strife—a deep and persistent instinct has always struggled, and now in our own day is rising to prevailing expression. Despite the gloomiest prophets of sackcloth and ashes, something in the human spirit has insisted upon believing that this earth and the life upon it are goodly things. Outward circumstances may explain it, and under certain great historical environments may have made it inevitable, but nevertheless there is something essentially abnormal in the kind of Christianity which has seemed to make the joys of life into the forbidden land from which the pilgrim must avert his gaze. The healthy-mindedness of our time will turn away from a dour religion. It accounts cheerfulness so indispensable an element in the rightly-furnished spirit that the cultiva-

tion of it becomes itself a religious duty for all who mean now to be religious. In *The Celestial Surgeon,* Robert Louis Stevenson rightly prayed that God might stab the spirit wide awake

> "If I have faltered more or less
> In my great task of happiness."

And as Dean Brown, of Yale, has written, "Goodness is the most interesting and winsome thing on earth. It is the wine of life. It is the poetry of human existence. It is human action set to music and singing the same tune the morning stars sang together in that high hour when all the sons of God shouted for joy."

May it be, therefore, that we are in process of discovering more truly the real genius of Christianity and the real spirit of Jesus Christ? Is it true that not when men are sombre and solemn-faced, but when they are glad, they are most in accord with him? And is it further true that in this free and spontaneous time of ours, when people everywhere are asserting the right to be glad, the way of learning *how* to be glad leads not away from

Jesus Christ but directly toward him and the guidance which he gives?

To all those questions the answer is, yes. If we want to be glad, and to *stay* glad, come fair weather or come foul, we have need to learn of Jesus.

But he was called the "Man of Sorrows," we shall be reminded. Yes, so he was, and sorrows enough he bore. But the point in which the Christian tradition has been misleading is this: that it has stressed this tremendous fact of the sorrows which he took upon him, and, under the spell of that tragic consciousness, has failed to reflect the unconquerable radiance of his spirit over which no sorrows could prevail. The tendencies of systematized theology have moved in the same direction. The awfulness of Jesus' dying laid hold upon men's imaginations. Thinkers of the Church must explain the meaning of that tragedy, and justify the grandeur of that atonement. In so doing, they brought the dark problem of the last days of Jesus' life so into the forefront of attention that the sunny beauty of most of his own living was all but forgotten. Thus it has come to pass that most of the representations of Jesus, whether from our mental concepts or from the paintings of

artists or from the stained glass windows in the churches, are tragic ones. He kneels there under the olive trees of Gethsemane in his agony. He stands before the jeering crowd in Pilate's court, bound and spit upon, with blood trickling down his forehead under the contemptuous crown of thorns. Or upon the crucifix, which a religious devotion grown morbid has installed in so many churches instead of the empty and transcended cross, his broken body, disfigured and terrible, hangs before the eyes of worshippers to bring its perpetual suggestion of anguish and disaster. No wonder that much of Christendom thinks of him as the "Man of Sorrows"! No wonder that innumerable Christians have the instinctive feeling that it is somehow unfitting, and almost irreverent, to think of Jesus Christ in any close association with their natural joys!

But no crucifix, nor any other representation of a burdened and beaten figure, gives a true impression of the real Jesus. When we get back of our long-distorted mental images, and look through the open windows of the gospels, we can see that plainly enough. "The common people heard him gladly." Have the crowd of ordinary men, with their simple emotional responses, ever rallied round any

dispirited and dispiriting leader? Have they ever taken as their hero anyone who did not show in every line of him the gladness of power and the mastery of an abundant life? Peter and Andrew and James and John, hardy fishermen, left their nets at a word and followed him. Would they have done so unless they had seen in him something so utterly convincing that all their ordinary considerations faded before it? The Pharisees said he was "the friend of publicans and sinners," and he was,—but he was more. He was the friend of everybody who would open the way for him. He was the friend of little children, and they came running to his arms. People wanted him when they were sick, and when they wept for their dead—we remember that; we often forget that they wanted him just as instinctively at their marriages and at their feasts (go read how many of them there are in the gospels), and that he was as fully himself at one as at the other. A very notable recent study of the life of Jesus has this arresting title, *The Man Nobody Knows.* Almost nobody does know the real Jesus, whom the crucifixes and the via dolorosas have hidden from us,—Jesus with that smile of his that men would give their lives to win, Jesus

whose voice said "follow" and men arose to go to the ends of their earth with him, Jesus whose fascination reached all the way from Nicodemus, the ruler, to the poor despised woman who crept into Simon the Pharisee's house to break the box of ointment at his feet.

"This was his own picture of himself," Brice Barton has written in *The Man Nobody Knows*—"a bridegroom! The center and soul of a glorious existence; a bringer of news so wonderful that those who received it should be marked by their radiance as by a badge * * * for three years Jesus walked up and down the shores of his lake and through the streets of towns and cities, trying to make them understand. Then came the end, and * * * the distortion began. He who cared nothing for ceremonies and forms was made the idol of formalism. Men hid themselves in monasteries, they lashed themselves with whips; they tortured their skins with harsh garments and cried out that they were followers of him—of *him* who loved the crowd, who gathered children about him wherever he went, who celebrated the calling of a new disciple with a feast in which all the neighborhood joined! 'Hold your head high,' he had exclaimed. 'You are lords of the universe * * * only a

little lower than the angels * * * children of God.' But the hymn writers knew better. They wrote:

"'Oh to be nothing, nothing'

and

"'For such a *worm* as I.'"

Well, it is our business now to correct some of the old hymns, and to set our appreciation of the meaning of Jesus to the music of a new song. Christian tradition will never let us lose the deeper and more tragic notes, but to these must be added a sense of that victorious joy of Jesus which sweeps on with its prevailing rhythm through every changing chord. Underneath "the Man of Sorrows" was the mightier Man of Gladness, *possessing* his sorrows as he possessed the circumstances of his happiness when these came, and possessed *by* neither—radiant, confident, and overcoming in the greatness of his soul.

What were the springs of his gladness—the springs from which he could drink, whether his skies were bright or dark?

1. In the first place, he drew his gladness from the beauty of the world.

Those were very revealing words in the Sermon on the Mount when Jesus said, "Con-

sider the lilies of the field." They were pretty to look at, of course—these lilies of the field. They were not white, like our lilies, but more like our gladioli, gorgeous colored things climbing above the golden level of the ripening wheat. But then they were very familiar, even to commonness. They could be found everywhere—and they added no value to the wheat. It seemed inconceivable to the average Galilean that anyone who had a great message to proclaim and an urgent work to do should be wasting time over these useless things which sprang up today and would be gone tomorrow. And the important men of Israel and the pompous scholars of the church were doubtless half contemptuous and half angry when Jesus began to take wild lilies and such like trifles as texts for a serious sermon. They were used to hearing theological matters argued out on the basis of the recognized authorities. If men wanted to know God's revelation, let them turn to the accredited teachers. What did the patriarchs and the elders say? What was written in the law? That was the important matter. What, then, was this frivoling about lilies?

Nevertheless, said Jesus, consider the lilies. Consider also other very familiar things—

seed springing in the furrow, the bird on its nest, the flame of the candle, the wheat and the bread, the sun and the rain. You have known them, or you *think* so, all your life. But stop now and *consider*. Consider what they mean.

For Jesus they meant—God. God was not far off for him, in place or time. God did not need to be sought in ancient books. He did not have to be proved from ancient arguments. He was *there* in the significance of every least and commonest thing whose beauty spoke of Him. When Jesus looked upon the lilies with those deep-dreaming eyes of his, he saw in them a grace of God more inexhaustible and fertile than all the blundering ugliness of men; and the vision of that was in his eyes as he went back unwearyingly to meet the gainsaying of those who were so slow to learn. When Jesus looked at the nesting bird his spirit caught the steady peace which Lanier was long afterward to phrase:

"As the marsh-hen secretly builds in the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest in the greatness of God."

The steady shining of the candle flame spoke to Jesus of the mightier Light that should not be extinguished; and through the sun and

rain, he looked up to the unfailing beneficence of Him whose harvest in the spirit no chance of men should bring to naught.

If we would win gladness, we may well go to Jesus' springs. Many of us never even *see* the beauty of the world—much less *consider* it. Life is a frantic rushing hither and yon, a swirl of dust on the roadway, a glaring of headlights that hide the stars. It is hectic with movement, so that eyes have lost their focus to read the secret of the things at rest.

I remember standing, with one other, on a summer's evening, by a low wooden bridge which spanned a little tidal river at the edge of narrow marshes which melted to the sea. Beneath the bridge, the slow swirl of the incoming waters moved like the pulse of ocean before the silent breathing of the tide. Up the river, the water crept round the green islands of the reeds, and from the mirror of its faintly-rippling surface flamed the reflected glory of the thousand-tinted sky. Out on the deep water, sails dipped down to the horizon—in the long glow of the golden sunset, mystic and unearthly as the flight of wide-winged souls across the last, far barriers of the world. Slowly the sunset faded like a dying torch. Twilight then, and silence, and the

dusk, and stars alight like candles on the high altar of the night.

But meanwhile, on both slopes of the road that led down to the little bridge, and climbed away from it on the other side, the stream of automobiles roared. When for a chance moment the visible stretches of the way were empty, still from the distance came the growing sound of the rushing wheels, and over the crest of the hill the tilted glare of lights affronted the quiet sky. It was not conceivable that all the chattering people in these speeding motors had any purpose commensurate with their haste. Against the background of the tranquil sea and sky, they seemed like puppets caught in the whirling belt of some mad mechanism of unmeaning life. And as they passed, they turned a fleeting glance of question toward the figures lingering so inexplicably on the bridge.

Thus may our preoccupations make us blind. Hurrying from nowhere to nowhere, we may behold nothing on the way.

"The world is too much with us, late and soon
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.
Little we see in nature that is ours,
We have given our lives away, a sordid boon."

And yet, meanwhile, the song of larks is fresh in morning meadows, the sweetness of the wild-rose breathes amid the hedge-rows, and over far horizons at the twilight, the stars build their white ladders to the sky.

The religious teaching which finds its authority in Jesus may well concern itself today with making men and women—and more especially the young, who are still impressionable—understand that a sensitive perception of the beauty of the world is no idle and sentimental matter, but one of the most practical conditions of dependable happiness. The mind which is not filled with better things will certainly be taken possession of by worse ones. The reason for the inner discontent, and even disgust, of many people is that the emptiness of their spirits invites the lodgment of every chance-blown seed of common things. Mean suggestions of ill gossip, the trivial rancors of an imagined personal slight, worry and hate and cynicism and fear, come like rank weeds to choke the spirit with their spreading ugliness. Wherever we go, alone or in company, we dwell with ourselves; and no man or woman can long be happy if whenever they walk within the fields of their inner consciousness, they see nothing and breathe

nothing but these weeds. In that ever-memorable biography of Alice Freeman Palmer, there is an account of the "Happiness Club" which she once organized for a group of little girls in one of the dingiest tenement districts of Boston, and one of the three rules was this,— that every day they should each one see and notice something beautiful. That rule is as imperative for those who live in luxurious houses, and for all those who dash about the roads in automobiles, as it is for those who walk the tenement streets; and in the one case as surely as the other the lack of a deliberately trained perception for the beauty of bird and flower and tree and sky can bring an inner barrenness. But he whose mind is furnished with sights and sounds of recollected beauty has gone no little way toward independence of the outer world of circumstance; for down the secret paths of his remembrance, he can walk as in a garden, inviolately fragrant and serene.

And in such a garden God walks—even as in the old story of Paradise. There is a deep connection between the perception of beauty and that spiritual awareness which is religion. When before the lilies and all other lovely created things we follow the example of Jesus

not only to stop, and look, but also to *consider*, then that which communicates itself to us is more than an æsthetic stimulus. A mightier something reaches through. The moving Soul of all things speaks to the soul which He has fashioned for Himself in man.

There is a fine expression of this truth in Michael Pupin's autobiography, *From Immigrant to Inventor*. As a boy he was sent with the other boys of his native village to watch the cattle on the plains of Banat, near the hostile Roumanian frontier; and thus he described his feeling then:

"The light of the stars, the sound of the grazing oxen, and the faint strokes of the distant church-bell were messages of caution which on those dark summer nights guided our vigilance over the precious herd. These messages appealed to us like the loving words of a friendly power, without whose aid we were helpless. * * * In the darkness of night, * * * the rest of the world had gone out of existence; it began to reappear in our consciousness when the early dawn announced what we boys felt to be the divine command, 'Let there be light,' * * * and the sun heralded by long white streamers began to approach the eastern sky, and the earth gradually appeared as if by an act of creation.

Every one of those mornings of fifty years ago appeared to us herdsmen to be witnessing the creation of the world—a world at first of friendly sound and light messages which made us boys feel that a divine power was protecting us and our herd. * * *

"There is no Serb boy who has not heard that beautiful Russian song by Lyermontoff, the great Russian poet, who says:

" 'Lonely I wander over the country road,
And in the darkness the stony path is glimmering;
Night is silent and the plains are whispering
To God, and star speaketh to star.'

"Lyermontoff was a son of the Russian plains. He saw the same burning stars in the blackness of a summer midnight sky which I saw. He felt the same thrill which David felt and through his Psalms transmitted to me during those watchful nights of fifty years ago. I pity the * * * boy who has never felt the mysterious force of that heavenly thrill."

What he felt there, others have felt and all may feel. Let a man take thought as he moves beneath the stars. Let him taste the wideness of the night-wind blowing from the unfathomed spaces. Let him be still before the Presence moving in the vast resurgence of the

dawn. Standing thus with soul attentive, suddenly he will know that he has made contact with the sublimity of God; and after that, no trivial reason for unhappiness can outweigh the deeper surety which he holds within.

2. The second spring of Jesus' gladness was his sense of the wonder of man.

"He knew what was in man," one of the gospels says. In the first place, he knew what was within himself. No one can read thoughtfully the records of his life without perceiving the incomparable certitude and poise of Jesus' own self-consciousness. Through every change of scene he moves with sure directness. Over every circumstance rises the quiet mastery of his self-possession. He had that irresistible greatness before which the diffuse spirits of ordinary men always must make way because they recognize the conquering authority of its radiantly gathered power. The quiet years of preparation in Nazareth had not been in vain. When he came out to make his public contacts, he knew his own soul in all its heights and deeps and widths of mighty communion with the infinite—and knowing that, is it any wonder that he could be glad?

Also, he knew what was in others. The vast mirror of his own spirit gave him under-

standing of what is in man; his sympathy, and friendliness gave him the key of understanding into the hearts of individual men. He must have smiled often at their pathetic foibles; it is evident that he pitied often, and that sometimes his white perception of the ideals men ought to rise to made him terrible in his rebuke to the rebellion of their deliberate sin; but most of all, it is evident that he perceived, and called into action, as no other has ever done, the grandeur of men's unguessed nobilities. He loved human life as such, and entered with instinctive joyousness into its simplest as well as into its greatest relationships.

In the fourth gospel, the first miracle attributed to Jesus is one which had for its purpose simply the relief of an embarrassed host and the increase of social happiness at a wedding feast. He was at home everywhere—in the house of Simon, the proud Pharisee, or in that of Matthew, the publican. Not only did he give the riches of himself to people, but also he responded to the best they had to give to him. He sought out people for his own sake as well as theirs, because he liked the friendly simple fellowship; and he had that intimate genius of approach which broke

down all constraint. We may see that in the loving informality with which he went in and out of the house of Simon Peter at Capernaum, in the way he met the woman of Samaria, in his welcome at the house in Bethany. And, beyond the specific record of the gospels, there is much which what we know of Jesus makes it easy to imagine. The shadowed last days in Jerusalem do not represent the tenor of the larger part of Jesus' comradeship with his disciples, and of theirs with him. They were strong and young and virile,—men who were bred to the out-of-doors. They walked with Jesus in an unfettered adventure. They went through towns and villages where the eyes of grateful people followed them. They saw the sun rise and the mist lift over the lake of Galilee; they walked through the fragrant corn at noontide and made their meal where they would; they sat by the fire with Jesus in the evening; they prayed at his side under the stars,—and I think that often, before they lay down to sleep, as they remembered how that day the quick-witted answer of Jesus had confounded his pompous adversaries, and left them outraged and indignant, these men's full-throated laughter rang across the Galilean hills.

It was his beautiful, gracious gaiety which astonished and offended the dour ecclesiastics of his day. "Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?" "How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?" they complained. He listened, and smiled and went his joyous way. "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," he said. And to those in distress he used to say: "Be of good cheer" * * * "Your Father knoweth." He made men and women who were of scant worth in the world's eyes feel a new dignity in themselves. Once when the disciples had measured up to a commission his faith had set for them, the gospel tells,— "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." It made him glad to say to Zacchaeus whom the crowd scorned, "Today I must abide at thy house"—to sit down with the friends of Matthew, the converted tax-gatherer, at the feast which he gave,—to say to the pitiful woman of sin whom he alone understood, "Thy faith

hath saved thee; go in peace." And most of all I think he found his gladness when he took the volcanic stuff of human natures like those of Simon Peter, and of James and John, so hot-tempered that people, with wry humor, called them "Sons of Thunder," appraised their present and foresaw their future, shamed them and inspired them, humbled them and exalted them, refined their dross and kindled the power of their latent manhood into brighter flame until he made them into the beacons of the Lord.

In the gospel which bears the name of the best beloved disciple, and the one who perhaps understood his Master best, there is given the prayer which Jesus made in the upper room on the last night of his life; and through this prayer there shines the joy of Jesus in the growing souls of the men with whom he had identified himself. "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word * * * And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them." Very different from one another were the individuals in that group of the twelve, and Jesus dealt with them differently, and in each case

with an understanding love. Edward Rowland Sill, in the poem which begins—

> "Doubting Thomas, loving John,
> Behind the others following on"—

has drawn a picture of the truth,—a picture of men who only dimly knew what their own natures needed, and what their gifts of service were, and found themselves in Jesus, the shining of whose spirit lighted the souls in them.

Sometimes, of course, this identification of himself with others might appear as having brought to Jesus not gladness, but sorrow. Life for them, as for him, was often a shadowed thing. The more he associated himself with them, with their struggles and sometimes their disasters, the more he seemed to multiply the open gates through which tragedy might march into his own soul. But the truth was that which George Eliot has nobly interpreted at the climax of one of her greatest novels when Romola, with the memories of Savonarola in her heart, says to the boy Lillo: "We can only have the highest happiness, such as goes along with being a great man, by having wide thoughts, and much feeling for

the rest of the world, as well as ourselves; and this sort of happiness often brings so much pain with it, that we can only tell it from being pain by its being what we would choose before everything else, because our souls see it is good." Always Jesus had that "highest happiness"; but I doubt if there was ever a time when, because it brought so much pain with it, he found it difficult to "tell it from being pain." Pain was in it, but it transcended pain. The glory of his experience was that it included and mastered all the elements of life, and subdued these to his spirit's exaltation.

It was in tune with the victory of Jesus that a great English school-master cried: "My creed is life * * * Blessed be life the King!" Before everything which the unafraid and ready heart might be called upon to encounter, Jesus felt the thrill of the sufficiency of God flooding into the soul within to the full measure of the challenge without. In his own being, and in that which he shared in and for his friends, he gloried in the joy of the more abundant life.

3. Thus we are brought to the third source of the gladness of Jesus. In what we have just considered, we have suggested it, and in other chapters of this book, it is expanded;

but it needs to be made plain here. The highest exaltation of Jesus' spirit came from the consciousness of the holy purpose that unconquerably must find its way through him.

We can see that clearly enough in the records of his earlier ministry. Life was full of gladness then. The multitudes were flocking round him; the sick and needy folk were crowding to his door. Where the faith of the people was stirred, he could do mighty things for them. He was successful and beloved. "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," he cried. It would have been, if men had gone on believing and loving as they bade fair to do at first.

But the spirit of Jesus was to meet a different and a sterner test. A sullen and bitter opposition gathered head against him. He had to appear now in a different relationship. In the last chapter, we dwelt upon the formidableness of Jesus. Formidableness and gladness—intuitively we might imagine that these are keyed to inconsistent spiritual notes. But they are not. No life can be surely formidable unless it is glad, for gladness is the outward sign of that conscious unity of inner power through which alone a life becomes irresistible. If the moral and spiritual ideals

which Jesus incarnated are, and forever will be, formidable as doom to every influence that would gainsay them, the reason is that in a world which has God behind it, these things represent the Reality which will not be denied; and when, on the other hand, any soul becomes the channel for that Reality, it cannot but be glad.

So, with Jesus, God's purpose flooded through him like a sunlit tide, before whose mighty movement all the little sands and shoals of men's resistance were submerged. It was this radiant certainty of power that made him terrible to those who stood before him, even as it made him beautiful to his friends. Look at him in those moments when the hostile circumstances seemed most overwhelming. There in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night of the betrayal, who was the fugitive and who the master then? Under the trees, as the torches of the Roman guard drew near, the still, majestic figure waited, and when from the dark the collision of the meeting came, it was not Jesus, but the soldiers, who recoiled. In the hall of Pilate, he stood untroubled before the Roman and the angry crowd; and a note of unintended awe may have crept into Pilate's voice as he turned and said, "Behold,

the man!" Up the road of Calvary he went to crucifixion; and tortured though his body was, his spirit still was master. "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom!" the thief beside him cried. "Thy kingdom!" Crucified and broken, still that figure on the central cross revealed its majesty. And then there came his final cry, "It is finished!" Finished, the great adventure of his living; finished, the work which neither time nor death could mar; finished, his mighty witness to the truth that the only imperishable gladness belongs to him whose life is linked with God.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

THE test of the spirit of Jesus Christ—as we have seen—may be formidable not only to certain influences and institutions of our general life, but formidable also to the very Church itself which bears the name of Jesus. Indeed, there are many people in our time who recognize the beauty of that first simple fellowship in which the original disciples were gathered round the person of Jesus, and yet refuse to draw the further conclusion that the vast organization, or group of organizations, now called the Christian Church is of vital importance today. Deliberately the interrogation has been raised, "Why the Church?" Is organized Christianity, in the form in which our fathers have handed it down to us, going to endure in these new times?

To certain instincts even that question must bring an unpleasant shock. It comes like a

disagreeable wind to ruffle the feathers of conventional piety where it has been sitting placidly upon its nest. But the fact of our modern world is that the rough winds do blow, and do most rudely enter into the little shelters of what many have supposed to be their most inviolate ideas. Whether we like it or not, a considerable part of modern public opinion is challenging the right of the Church to endure. There are those who are saying that organized Christianity, in its elaborate institutionalism, has had its day and will presently crumble, as so many other ancient institutions of our world of late have crumbled and begun to disappear.

In some quarters, there is avowed hostility to the Church. Russia has shown us that. In no country of the world did the Church as an institution seem more firmly planted than in Russia before the Revolution. The power of the Czars maintained it. The strong arm of autocracy safeguarded it. The spires of its church buildings were on every skyline, and at the end of every road were the ikons of some holy place. Yet in Russia the government which has held power for eight years and will hold it for nobody knows how many years more, has deliberately set to work to extermin-

ate organized Christianity root and branch. Whether it will succeed or not, is another matter. But no one can doubt that it has tried and is trying now. Not only has it sought to discourage, and when it could to suppress, the religious observances of men and women; it has also set to work to educate boys and girls in thorough-going repudiation of the Church and all its works. Nor is the spirit which is alive in Russia confined to that land. There are groups here in America implacably fighting the whole idea of organized religion. The bitterness of that hostility grows out of the belief that the Church everywhere is by its nature that which it once largely was in Russia,—the ally of autocracy and oppression, the paid retainer of privilege, using its spiritual weapons to keep the poor in ignorance and subjection, in order that the rich and powerful may hold their sway. Nor is it among bolshevists and communists or other extremists in the economic order alone that this hostility is found. All through the ranks of labor here in America, there runs a vein of bitterness against the Church which finds expression in those who say that the Church, with its great endowments, shares the point of view of the rich and comfortable, that it is more inter-

ested in its property than in the people, and that the great sums which it is constantly raising for endowments and for cathedrals mortgage its soul increasingly to things-as-they are, and enslaves its freedom to speak and to work for that wider human democracy which the common man is seeking. People who say this and believe it, think of the Church as the people in France thought of the Bastille, a great citadel and symbol of privilege which must be thrown down in order that the rising forces of democracy may go forward.

Today also the Church is being assailed, not only by its avowed enemies, but by its disappointed friends. There is an increasing number of men who have loved the Church and belonged to it who are wistful for it still, and yet have slipped out of its ranks. There are ministers, and among them some of the most ardent of the younger men, who have dropped out of the ministry and gone into social work. There is a multitude of lay people, who increasingly are thinking of the Church as a relic of ineffective sentiment, and who think that through other channels the genuinely recreative forces of our time will flow. They work in settlements, in charity organization societies, and in other groups which are

seeking a reconstruction of our social order upon broader foundations of justice and brotherhood. They do not dislike the Church, but rather they find themselves regretfully ignoring it because they think it wastes its energies in discussions of outgrown doctrinal distinctions which have little to do with life and is blind to those tremendous issues of life itself with which a living devotion ought to have to do. The opinion of this group is emphatically summed up in these words of a man who was a minister of a Christian Church in New York City and is still a religious leader, though no longer in the Christian Church:

"These churches as organizations are an intolerable interference with the programme of modern life and are, therefore, to be transformed or replaced as speedily as possible. Protestantism in all its forms, both orthodox and liberal, is as dead a religion today, and therefore as subversive a social influence, as was medieval Catholicism in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. We are living in an age when new religious forces are everywhere emerging into conscious life, and therefore should prepare for a new reformation."

But most serious of all is the fact that many who remain nominally within the Church are

only indifferent defenders of it. The obligation of Church membership sits lightly upon the shoulders of a large number of those who profess a certain degree of attachment. Often the whole attitude is wrong. People take the Church as a sort of selfish possession, the business of which is to please them, and with regard to which they very lightly express their criticism when it does not. There have been times when men died for the Church. The roll of the martyrs is long and glorious. Men and women of flesh and blood like ours, with the same instinct of life, the same love of the pleasant earth and the sky and the sun and human homes and the faces of their beloved, have gone to the stake and the scaffold, have been stoned and sawn asunder, have faced the executioner's sword and the lions in the arena for the loyalty they bore the Church. Where is the temper which matches that today? Is it matched in the casual laziness which comes to church only when it is convenient? Is it matched in the pleasure-loving irresponsibility that makes so-called "week-ends" in the country obliterate the habit of worship? Is it matched in that relaxed spiritual fibre which makes so many men and women listen amiably to the message of the Church so long as it is

agreeable to their interest, but never seriously face the fact that it calls upon them for high self-discipline and devotion to that Kingdom of God which must mean everything, or nothing? It never has been in the past, and it never will be in the future, that the Church needs most of all to fear its foes. Its gravest peril lies in its indifferent defenders. The Church today has too many of the sort of Laodiceans of whom the Book of Revelation said, "I know thy works, that they are neither cold nor hot." Lukewarm they are, mere tepid and inconsequential Christians, who count neither this way nor that. "Why the Church?" then, is not a question asked only by those who are definitely outside the Church. It is the question which some inside the Church are not only asking, but inferentially answering, too. A great many who say with their lips that they believe the Church is a good thing are saying with the actual weight of their daily emphasis that, however theoretically good it may be, it is not important enough to give them any wholehearted concern.

In the face, therefore, of denial on the one hand and at least a partial indifference on the other, it is well for those who feel convinced

of the Church's worth to think explicitly as to what that worth may be, and then proceed to vindicate it.

I

By a parable, first, the significance of the Church may be expressed.

On the maps of certain great tracts of our western country, one may find the marks which indicate a river. Go there in the summer, or in the fall, look for the river, and what will you see? A great scar on the prairies, with ragged banks, perhaps, and the bottom of it cast into sandy ridges, with long lines of wave marks which show that swirling waters have been there. But now the whole bed of the river is as dry as sun-baked brick. Once the rain had fallen in the region from which the river flows, but long before the summer came, with its need for irrigation, the waters had poured away. Wherever the hills are barren, or wherever they are being made so by the ruthless cutting of the forests, there is a vast wasting of the waters which might have accumulated from the rains and the winter snows. Only the covert of trees can protect the ground and the moisture in the ground.

It offers the sponges of soft earth into which the rains may sink and seep far down until they feed the underlying springs. And as the living trees, and all the protection of their leaves, is needful for the conservation of the rains, so also leaves which have died and fallen in unnumbered previous years, and have formed, little by little, the mold of the forest's floor, are an inestimable agency in holding the moisture and preserving it from wasteful flood. Once let the forests go, then the soft mold, left unprotected, is washed away by the rain. On the hard clay or barren rock of the denuded slope, nothing is left to absorb the waters, and great wastes of ravaging floods, and long months of drought to follow, are, henceforth, the history of the year.

So it is also with the Church in its relationship to the influences which nourish the life of men. The long development of historic worship is like the growth of the protecting forests. The thoughts and aspirations, the living forms of worship and devotional expression, make a covert like that of the interlacing trees. The influences of God come down and sift through the experience of the Christian fellowship; they seep into those underlying

springs which presently well forth in the serene waters of a tested faith. It is a slow process and a hidden one. The man who drinks of the spring at the mouth of the valley may not see the forests on the far slopes without which that spring would never have been. He may suppose that he can be indifferent to the cutting down of forests which he has never seen. What difference can it make to him what happens far off there where the rain falls, so long as he in his particular place has the spring? "What difference do the churches make to me?" asks the man who never goes into them. "I find that I can get along very well without them. I have my own ideas of right and wrong, and I live by these." But his shallow opinion takes no account of the fact that without the forests there presently will be no flowing water, and that without the long, sweet growth of religious institutions, there will be no accumulation of those beneficent influences which pour out by hidden channels into the matter-of-fact thinking of men. As the Christian centuries go on, there are in Christian lands a thousand springs of clear and strengthening waters from which men drink without stopping to inquire into the far sources from which they came. The

sense of social responsibility which increasingly is pervading our industrial relationships, and the gradual idealizing of every-day pursuits, trace back to those quiet glades of religious worship and service which the churches represent. Therefore, it would be a perilous thing if those great institutions which accumulate religious inspirations, as the forests accumulate the rain, should ever be destroyed. All the living growth of men's ways of worship have their inestimable worth; and even the heritage of those old forms and outgrown ideas which, like the dead leaves of yesterday, have fallen to the ground, possess their value, too. Through them the waters of the new thoughts and new interpretations must make their way, and by that sifting are held back from hasty channels and saved for the deeper reservoirs of quiet assurance. When for some ruthless purpose of human gain, or through mere indifference because he thinks he is too far away to be concerned, a man sanctions the destruction of religious institutions, he sanctions destruction of the forests which, when they are gone, will turn the fertile lands into a desert. Let men today remember this, when with a frivolous unconcern they contribute to the influences

which may in the end destroy the nurturing places of religion. Let men consider this who inaugurate in their business a policy which gives to themselves, and it may be to hundreds of others, the excuse that they must spend Sunday at work. Let men consider this who take their golf bags and go to the country club, while they indifferently suppose that their wives and children will be going to church. They, by all the weight of their example, have laid the axe to the root of the tree. They have made it plain that, so far as they care about it, organized worship can disappear from modern society. Some of them would be startled if they were told that that is what they are doing; but the truth remains. Every man and woman who by the actual choice of his or her own life sharpens the axe of that indifference which can in time destroy the fairest growth of the worship of the centuries, contributes to the coming of a time when their children may live in a world harsh and barren as a desert because all the sources of sweet and generous inspirations shall have vanished with the feeding places of its springs.

Great is the service, on the other hand, of those who as members of the Church cherish the trees of God—those trees whose mighty

trunks are the experience of the centuries, whose leaves are the thoughts and prayers of living men. Often men cannot see the immediate influence of the Church. Looking only at the near and obvious, they might be dismayed. Does the Church, with all its great organization, with all its august inheritance of the years, justify its life? And then they look abroad into the community and see the motives of kindness, the flowing wells of generosity, the mighty outpourings of human compassion to meet the depths of human need, the striving of the human conscience to slake the thirst for a better life, and they know that though much of our world be parched and unsatisfied, yet, nevertheless, the great streams of the Christian influence of the Church are going forth, and that all the best that men do drink of in hope and faith and confidence, traces back to the quiet places of worship, as the springs trace back to the sweet serenity of the trees.

II

The significance of the Church may be expressed in a further way. The thirst which its spiritual springs can satisfy is a very deep

thirst. It is the thirst of men's desire for that which will invigorate their impulse to be good.

Now it is possible that there are some people from whom words so simple as these will provoke nothing but a smile. To be good! That sounds like a last century Sunday-school book. It is nice, mid-Victorian sentiment. But how does that express what we want to-day? We want knowledge. We want life. We want up-to-date and unfettered contact with our modern world; and the first thing the Church has to say is nothing more than this: "I will help you to be good!"

To all such, if such there be, the answer is this: that those who cannot appreciate the greatness of being good possess not more but less of that virile and up-to-date intelligence concerning which they like to talk. Let the fashions of men's ideas come and go as they will, there is nothing deeper in the human mind and soul than that instinct which tells us that it is our business to be good. Those personalities which are defective will not know that. Those men and women who spiritually seem forever morons will not know that. But those who have grown to the full stature of normal manhood and womanhood will know

it. Here is the great, real world of life to which we must relate ourselves in such a way as will give us an inner sense of honor. There are temptations of the flesh which we must resist if we would not turn back down the track of evolution to that level of the ape and tiger upon which the sub-human remnants in ourselves are prone to move. We have responsibilities which we cannot shirk, and we must learn to carry them truly. There are those who look to us and love us and expect more of us than we with our poor powers are able to measure up to. Somehow we must find a spirit which will enable us to be worthy of this challenging expectation. Around us are the great causes of our time which wait to be served,—conceptions of business made more broadly human, suggestions of a more responsible stewardship in wealth, new ideals of the kind of peace which men with brotherhood in their hearts may build in industry and create between the nations. For these things to come true, there will be needed not shrewd men and smart men merely—the world has had enough of those. What is needed are the men of spiritual intelligence, keen enough to know in our complex modern world what goodness is,

and strong enough to try to gain the goodness which their spirits see.

If we want an illustration to assure us of this overwhelming significance of goodness as a factor in our world, we may well remember the life of that quiet man whose letters, recently published, singularly won the admiration of the American people. Never in the history of the world did there seem less chance for the individual to make his mark than during the years of the world war. The mass movements of human passions were so gigantic, the dreadful machinery of a destroying science so overwhelming, the vast forces at grips with one another so huge, so blind, and so impersonal, that to many it seemed as though the world were caught in a horrible fatalism against which nothing that seemed so feeble as one mere individual spirit could greatly matter. But we read the letters of Walter H. Page, and what do we see? We see that in the most critical moment of destiny for our civilization, when the complexities of the blockade threatened more than once to involve England and America in disagreement and irritations that might have led to war, one wise and gentle man, working at his desk by day, sitting before his fire by night, thinking his

long thoughts, pouring out his convictions in his letters, molded destiny with his quiet hand. England which has honored him in Westminster Abbey, and America where he was born, alike know now that, because Walter Page was transparently honest, unsullied in his own purpose and strong through his trust in others to call out the best in them, the friendship of the two great kindred nations of the world was preserved through days which were dark with peril. In him there shone the tireless power which goodness gives, and, though he was a man of keen intelligence, it was not supremely his intelligence, but his goodness that made him great.

But suppose we should say: Granted that all this be true. Let this value of goodness be admitted. What has this necessarily to do with belief in that great organized institution which we call the Church?

For answer, we need to go back momentarily to that conception of the Church which was expressed in a preceding chapter. The Church began with, and forever must re-express, the personal relationship of men with the personality of Jesus Christ. Many elements in the Church's development may be subject to grave criticism because they ob-

scure this. But that is what the Church, in the deep understanding of all who truly love it, unchangingly is supposed to mean. It is true, of course, that there are those outside the Church who love and follow Jesus Christ more humbly and truly than many of the professed disciples within it. But it is also true, both in history, and broadly speaking in our present life, that it is the Church which assures the steady fact that Jesus Christ will continually be made manifest. Those outside the Church who possess the Spirit of Jesus are inheritors of truth which they have received, if not directly from the Church, then none the less from an environment or an inheritance which the Church has made into what it is. Though far outside the borders of the Church, the living waters which they drink had their origin in her hills. When Jesus Christ was crucified, it was the Church which kept the memory of him flowing like a never-failing spring in the heart of its fellowship. The Church preserved the story of his life and words in the written gospels. It organized its worship round his communion supper, which should bring the living presence of him immortally back to his disciples. It framed the calendar of its devotions so that every year it

should think again of his birth and his boyhood, the beginning of his ministry and his temptation, his preaching in Galilee, and his last journey to Jerusalem, his betrayal, his crucifixion, and his resurrection. Outside the Church are the fugitive gleams of men's awareness of Jesus; but it is in the sanctuary of the Church that the central fire of that awareness has been burning. The influence of the thought of Jesus upon men's minds and upon their instinctive valuations is a vastly wider thing than any statistics of the Church can show. Multitudes of people in our day honor him, and are influenced by him, who have no connection with the Church. But would this continue to be true if the Church should disappear? In order that the consciousness of him may not grow dim, is there not needed that constantly repeated teaching and that perpetually renewed power of suggestion through worship which the Church alone assures?

Moreover, for the help which men need to enable them to be good after the pattern of Jesus, there is to be reckoned, not only the Church's teaching and worship, but its fellowship,—very faulty though that fellowship often is, especially in our own time and in our

great heterogeneous cities. In every Christian Church there exists a general expectation of righteousness that is strengthening, a comradeship in sympathy, not always well developed, but capable of heart-warming power, a touch of life with life at those highest points of contact where the best that there is in one soul of courage and power and aspiration communicates itself to the other. On the flyleaf of the Bible of one of the greatest Christian leaders of our time, there was written, after a quiet conference to which he had gone away for a day or two with a group of fellow-ministers, "Committed myself again with Christian brethren to unreserved docility and devotion before my Master." There is a kind of devotion to the cause of Jesus Christ and to that whole interpretation of life which he incarnates that is not easily attained by a man in loneliness, but only through that contagious desire which comes to him in the midst of his brethren.

In the great cities, with their flood of endless traffic, it is becoming almost impossible for any vegetation to live. The once fine trees of Central Park in New York are dying, and along the streets the trees are long since gone. Even the grass, which is sown in the few va-

cant spaces here and there, wages a losing struggle for its life. The reason is that the dirt of the streets, and more particularly the gases from the exhausts of the innumerable automobiles, clog the sensitive pores of the growing things, poison the soil itself, and stifle the leaves and flowers. Against these handicaps the trees and the plants might continue to struggle, as some of them do in the parks, if they can have the sunlight, but in the crowded blocks of the city, with blank walls rising close on every side, even the sunlight can only scantily enter, and the greatest courage and perseverance can hardly grow a garden any more. What happens with grass and flowers is a parable of what may happen to the souls of men. If we live in a world the atmosphere of which is steeped with a kind of spiritual carbon-monoxide gas, the poison of which is the more subtly perilous because it is not noticeable until it has done its work, and if we live crowded so close with our narrow concerns that no sunlight of a diviner suggestion shines upon us, then the life and fragrance of our finer selves will surely die. And the value of the Church is that through its doors we do come into an atmosphere that can be kept clean from the destroying influences, and into

which there does shine, like an unclouded sun, the recreating suggestion of the meaning of Jesus which men can carry in their hearts when they go back to the world outside. And that is why those who want to be good,—or, in the old words of that much-tempted and bravely striving man, the Apostle Peter, those who want to "grow in grace,"—may well ask themselves whether our world can do without the Church and still produce the finest human life.

III

Furthermore, the Church which helps men to be good must enable them through co-operation to make their ideals of goodness socially effective. It is meant to bind individuals together into a fellowship of redeeming service. Jesus came to inaugurate the Kingdom of God's spirit on the earth, and the Church was to take its meaning from its relationship to that Kingdom. There is no such thing as a solitary and self-sufficient Christian. A man who understands the spirit of Jesus will be trying to join his strength with that of all other Christians in order that the will of Jesus may be done. In this impulse which leads to

organization, Christians are simply following one of the deepest forces in all our human nature. The biologists and the psychologists tell us of what they call the herd instinct. Men share with the animals that attraction for their own kind which makes them flock together in order that their own individualities may be warmed and protected by the group, and in order that they themselves, as a part of the group, may attain the ends they want. Religious loyalty takes that fundamental instinct and sublimates it into the organized Church. In its ideal fulfilment, the Church is to be the multiplication of the spiritual energies of its single individuals. It is to be the phalanx for holiness and for helpful service in a world that needs the impact of strong forces to move it in the way of God.

If one should ask of any group of men and women, "Would you like to have some part in making this a better world?" certainly all the best of them would sincerely answer, Yes. If, further, one should ask, "Would you like to remove injustices which embitter men who suffer from them, would you like to help to put more kindness into industry, to lift the weak and enlighten the ignorant, and give all men a fuller and a fairer chance?" again they

would answer, Yes. If one should ask, "Would you like to have your part in creating among the nations the spirit of understanding which alone can safeguard us from the ruin of another war?" more than ever they would answer, Yes. But they would also say, "These are vast matters, dealing with the most complex relationships of men. And what can any individual do in regard to them?"

Save in rare instances, very little, and that is the reason why individuals must be brought together in an organization avowedly created to keep men's consciences sensitive to human needs, to inspire them with confidence in the sufficient grace of God, and to direct their united resources toward that which no single person can accomplish alone. Take any of the problems which we are confronted with today. Here, for one, is the question of the right relationship of capital and labor, involving not merely questions of money, but of manhood, requiring for its solution an adjustment between practical economic efficiency, on the one hand, and the rising instinct of the toilers, on the other, to be treated, not as "hands," but as whole human beings with minds and imaginations and free spirits that must find expres-

sion in their work. No single business man can work out the answer. He needs the whole body of Christian opinion behind him, studying, comparing experiences, creating opinion, as, for example, the commissions of the Federal Council of Churches are trying at this moment to do. Here is the question of world peace. No individual can create that peace. Not the greatest statesman on earth can bring it about. No treaties, nor leagues, nor courts, indispensable as these may be, can by themselves achieve it. There must be a new heart in the peoples, a new motive of good will. And what agency in the whole world is able to inspire these unless it be the Christian Church? Here is the vast problem looming on the horizon of tomorrow of the relation of the white races with the awakening yellow races of the East. Is civilization to perish and this planet to be drowned in blood in some gigantic struggle of the continents? Is the East to learn from the West only its materialism, its cruel will of economic exploitation, its force of arms,—and then, having learned these, to turn its innumerable millions loose to work their will? If not, there will be needed a new fellowship of human understanding

which only spiritual forces can create. And what spiritual force is there that can do this unless it be the Christian Church? The missions which Christianity has sent forth, the schools and hospitals it has planted, the whole ideal of human brotherhood in the love of Christ which it has proclaimed, have in them the power for our world-salvation. And if that power should fail, what else is there to take its place?

The Apostle Paul summed up the meaning and the high appeal of the Christian fellowship when he called it the body of Christ. There is power to call men to the Church's loyalty if it really be the body of Christ. Over our world, so needy and perplexed, his spirit broods; but in order for that spirit to be effective, it must find again its incarnation. It must take to itself the mystic body of that great company of men and women fashioned into a spiritual unity in Christ, thinking his thoughts, speaking his words, being to him the feet that shall carry his presence through the world and the hands that shall fashion the material of his Kingdom.

That is a picture of the ideal. In the Church

no such actual reality as that exists. Let this be acknowledged—and then what? Here at least is the Church as it approximates toward the great ideal. And the Church is as plastic as life itself, for it is made of the lives that enter it. I think now especially of those who are young and eager for reality. You are impatient with the little shallow quibblings over denominational differences which sometimes drown the voice of the Church in the jargon of the sects. You are half bewildered, half disgusted, at the attempts of many churchmen to lift into importance theological definitions and ecclesiastical pronouncements which you know have no vital consequence for our present time. You see that often the Church fritters its energies upon useless things and is neither turning its mind nor bending its mighty corporate strength toward those redemptive causes that might purify and sweeten our actual human affairs. All these limitations in the actual Church you recognize. But do you not recognize also the mighty possibility glimmering here and there for expression and waiting to be set on fire by the touch of eager spirits? You believe that if Jesus Christ were here the world would be a nobler and more thrilling place wherever he might

go. Is there not something to thrill you equally in the knowledge that men and women who want to do so can make the Church the body in which the Spirit of Christ even now shall live and move?

CHAPTER IX

TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?

IN the fourth gospel, there is recorded an occasion in the life of Jesus when many of the crowd which had followed him turned back and left him. His message upset them. "This is an hard saying," they declared; "who can hear it?" So they gave up listening, "and walked no more with him." Then Jesus asked his twelve closest friends, "Will ye also go away?" and the impulsive, quick-spoken one among them, Simon Peter, answered,— "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Which group was right then, and which is right now? When men have seen Jesus Christ and know something of his spirit, is it an indifferent matter to turn away on other paths and leave him? Can life go along as well without him as with him? Or, on the other hand, are they right who say, like Simon Peter, that Jesus has something to give to life which nothing else can equal?

Plainly, this is not merely a question which had to do with the choices of people in Palestine in centuries long since dead. Equally, it has to do with us here in America in this second quarter of the twentieth century. It concerns exactly the matter which we are bound to think of, and of which there is undying discussion. Does Christianity matter? Does, or does not, Jesus Christ have that significance for human life which those who have felt most strongly about him have always claimed? Let us face this question as directly as we can.

I

In the first place, let us consider the adverse judgment. It is plain that many people have turned away from Jesus and turn away from him still. What are the reasons that move them?

To begin with, there are those who turn back from any discipleship of Jesus Christ because the first fresh interest wears out. This was doubtless true in the particular incident described in the Gospel which we have just considered. When Jesus began his ministry, popular excitement kindled round it. Wide rumors spread as to what he was doing and

what he meant to do—as to miracles of power and healing, new benefits for the people, great overturnings in men's affairs. Crowd excitement ran for a time as a stream runs when, all of a sudden, it is filled with the foaming torrent of a summer rain; and individuals were swept into it from every side. Then, equally suddenly, the superficial interest began to subside. It was plain that Jesus' ministry was not to be made up of sensations and thrills. People began to discover that they were not to be whirled exultantly into an easy Paradise, either of earth or heaven. The stream of Jesus' central message ran deep and still. It required patience and quietness and perseverance to understand, and there were many who had no continuing taste for that. All of which is easy to understand and duplicate in our modern experience. Here are the people, for example, who are swept into the proximity of Jesus Christ in the enthusiasm of a revival, or by some other rare emotional experience. Here are the boys and girls who are carried up to him in the current of general expectation which was flowing when they were of that age at which many join the Church. Others were taking their new vows of allegiance to Jesus Christ. So they did also. With the tide

of enthusiasm running, it seemed a desirable matter of course to be a Christian. But then the later realization comes. It is perceived that the voice of Jesus speaks, not now in some emotional experience, but in the quiet accents of his steady meanings which impatience finds it difficult to stop and learn. The Kingdom of Heaven is not attained in some one dramatic moment, a realization which even so great a man as John the Baptist stumbled at. It must be reached by the willingness to think much, to pray deeply, to accept the slow discipline of faithful effort. That is what many in all times find it hard to appreciate. Now that the rush of summer waters is gone, they will not take the time to find the deep, still-flowing central stream. They imagine that Christianity is not interesting. They conclude there is nothing in it. So they leave it and go their way.

In the second place, in the crowd that decided to walk no more with Jesus, there were, and there always are, those who have decided that walking with him conflicts with those more profitable objectives which they mean to reach. At first, the multitude which streamed after Jesus thought that he would give them what they wanted. They believed

that religion and prosperity could be made to increase in exact proportion—that the more religion they could attain, by so much the more obvious blessings would they be rewarded. Jesus would confer his favors upon those who followed him. He would give honor and power and wealth to his disciples. Even if these positive rewards did not come at once, there would certainly be no loss attached to following him. But across this easy expectation there came presently the shadow of a dismaying new idea. Jesus was talking of the possibility of men having to suffer for his name. He was suggesting that, for the sake of inner strength and faithfulness, they might have deliberately to forego many of the gains the world holds out. Some of his incipient disciples did not like that long ago; and no more do some of us like it now. People are often looking, not for the one who holds the truth. They want to ally themselves with the one who has it in his hands to play the winning game. As men scrutinize the meaning of Jesus, they are not sure that he has that power, at least not in relation to the game they want to play. The thing they desire most is success as the prevailing estimates account it. They want to rise rapidly, to make much

money quickly, to command easy opportunities, "to make good" in those outward connections by which the sweeping general judgment estimates success. Too close a connection with Jesus Christ may seem incompatible with that. It may raise inconvenient questions as to whether a man does not owe a larger part of his first energies to making good the temple of God's thought inside his soul instead of turning all his attention to making good the structure that bulks large in the material world outside. Many of the crowd, therefore, turned away from Jesus, and do still. Probably there were young men in that multitude in Palestine who said that this man of Nazareth, with his words about taking up the cross, laid entirely too much of a handicap on those who wanted to get ahead. Certainly there are young men who think that today, and their Christian loyalties come to seem to them like weights which they must get rid of till a more propitious time. They do not want to be loaded with a sense of spiritual obligation which is too difficult. They think it unreasonable to be expected to give much time or thought to the Church. Religion is all very well; but it must not become inconvenient. They do not want to stay too

close within the hearing of the voice of Jesus Christ, if that voice is constantly to be carrying the suggestion that there may be a conception of life very much more important and more authoritative than the one they have set out to follow.

In the third place, there were those who turned from following Jesus, not because they were not interested in some of the things they knew he wanted to do, but because they believed that he never could do them. They knew that he had come to make a better world, and they wanted to see the world made better; but they had no confidence in his method. They believed in their nation and in what they regarded as its God-given destiny. They were the substantial men, the good citizens, the one-hundred-per-cent patriots of their day. They could have followed John the Baptist, but they could not follow Jesus. They wanted to see Israel exalted, her people made prosperous, the rest of the nations taught their place; and that is what they thought Jesus was coming to do. It is what they had always expected that the Messiah would do. And now Jesus was doing nothing of the kind. He was not speaking of any peculiar gain for Israel at all except the gain and glory of service.

He was talking about spiritual forces instead of what they regarded as real facts, about faith and brotherhood and love, instead of how to get rid of taxation and how to raise an army that would be strong enough to smash the power of Rome. It was plain to them that he was nothing more than a well-meaning fashioner of dreams. They thought he had good intentions, but no hard sense. He exasperated them by his impracticableness. So having listened as long as they could, they concluded they had had enough and went away. Neither are they lacking in successors. It has been a ground of offense against Jesus from that time to this, that his ideals are very beautiful, but that everybody knows they will not work. Nor is that judgment expressed only by those who leave his fellowship. It is implicitly held by a great many who claim to remain in it. It was not in the first century only that "idealist" has been a term of scorn, and that Christlike imaginations have been crucified.

So, then, for one cause or another which seemed sufficient, men did leave Jesus, and do leave him now. Then the question rises, What of those who yet stand upon the brink of decision? Looking at the little group who

were supposed to love him best, Jesus said, "Will ye also go away?" Suppose they had all gone away. Suppose the world had got rid, and could completely get rid now, of the attraction of Jesus. This is the question which all of us ought to face who have not conclusively made up our own minds. This is the logical end which those ought to be willing to consider who for their own part treat Jesus as relatively unimportant. What if we could eliminate his importance altogether? Would any particular loss have taken place?

Assume then that Jesus were disposed of. Consider that not only his body, but his influence also had once for all been crucified. The world, let us say, has heard of him, made up its mind that it can do without him and left him alone and forgotten. Well, then, what next? In the words of Peter, "To whom shall we go?" It is certain that men will go somewhere. They will not permanently stand still in an intellectual and spiritual void. With the same imperative insistence with which the lungs demand oxygen does this human nature of ours ultimately demand some sense of the meaning of life. It must find the conviction in which it can breathe satisfied. It must dis-

cover some atmosphere in which it can move and think as largely as its energies prompt, so that it can say, "This satisfies all that I want."

Suppose we consider, then, the answer of frank materialism. Some men believe that we can do without religion and have no significant value of this world disappear when it goes. Here, they say, is life with its obvious interests and its obvious rewards. We do not need any God to teach us that, in the long run, the man who sets his eye on the main chance and works hard will get the rewards this world has to offer, and in those rewards are highly satisfying elements. Luxury, ease, pleasure, power,—are all there. This cult of materialism may not be wholly selfish. It may be joined in the mind of the individual with a definite social purpose, and a good deal of our social thinking today is frankly materialistic. What is the need of churches? we are asked, if we have social settlements in their stead. What is the use of religion, if there are plenty of schools? If we can get production running at full blast, if business prosperity is established with dividends and wages reasonably adjusted, if everyone can have a decent livelihood, what further concern need we have for God? These questions

represent the complacent philosophy of not a few people in our time. If we can have the structure of life built comfortably enough, we think we can settle down and be content inside.

But can we? Suppose we did have all the things we want. And suppose the mass of men had all the things they think they want. Are we quite sure that we should be satisfied then? Are we sure that we could settle down with contentment and say, "Now I have achieved the state for which I was made?" Does it look that way, as we study the people who have great possessions and no greatness at all within themselves? Is there any more obviously corroding misery on this earth than that which is at the heart of the privileged idle man or woman who has every imaginable luxury around life and no meaning whatever within it? Does anybody really think that if we lost out of life all sense of a holy purpose and all consciousness of that immortal something in our destiny which makes us different from super-intelligent animals, we should find much beauty left in our living? The English philosopher Clifford, when he had lost his religious faith, wrote: "I have seen the spring sun shine out of an empty heaven

upon a soulless earth, and I have felt with utter loneliness that the Great Companion was dead." Something within us cries out for the Great Companionship. However powerful material things may be as an immediate inducement, materialism as a conviction for life ends in the ashes of disgust. To think that all we are here for is to pile up possessions, to eat, to sleep, and to move this way and that at the blind instincts of a human herd whose life and death alike amount to nothing, is intolerable to these spirits of ours, shot through as they are with those gleams and intimations which are divine. We need to feel that life means something, that it leads on to some end, and that, when we rise to the level of those thoughts and emotions within us which we recognize to be our highest, then we come into contact with the reality that life is meant to express. Never to know that, or, having known it, to lose the sense of it, is to dwell as Clifford says, in a world where the Great Companion is dead, and inevitably that will mean in the end an existence infinitely lonely in a gray twilight that deepens into a night that has no stars.

Well, if materialism cannot satisfy us, can we be satisfied by what one might call the

moral individualism of our day? There is a prevailing fashion of thought which does not harden into materialistic philosophy, on the one hand, nor will it accept any definite formulation of religious belief on the other. It prefers to commit itself to no codes or creeds whatever. Its one conviction is that life moves ahead most rationally by not having any too fixed convictions, especially by not having any which commit us to imitation of the past. There always has been, of course, a kind of bigoted conservatism which believes that the old is both right and inevitable; but the prevailing spirit of our present generation is that the old is neither inevitable nor right, but that, on the contrary, being old, it is presumably wrong. Everything is to be regarded as the mere product and expression of its time. The historic religions are products of other times and therefore are not vitally adapted to this time of ours. Jesus himself lived in a very different age and civilization. His thought was conditioned by the intellectual environment of that first century. Why should the twentieth century, therefore, listen particularly to what he has to say? Why, indeed, should any present-day individual listen much to what the examplars of other ages

have seen fit to say? Life must be adventured afresh. Its values must be discovered by each new personality for itself.

Now in this spirit and fashion of thought there is—let us hasten to recognize,—something that is inspiring. There is a frankness here and a plain forthright determination to find reality which is admirable. Many of our inherited notions do need to be criticized, and some of them to be burned away. It is good to have the boldness to see and to say that no tradition whatsoever is sacrosanct from investigation, and that nothing has the right to be accepted as the truth unless it can justify itself before the continuing tests of life. But when that is said, we must go on to say that the spirit of our time, in so far as it is represented in that which has just been described, can be essentially shallow and disappointing. It is contrary to all the analogies of our world and false to all the most established experiences of life to think that truth produces itself, like shallow pools, out of the unrelated thought of any transient generation. The sudden showers of our tempestuous ideas may come down indeed, like an immediate deluge, but when men complacently gather round the little ponds thus created in their dusty plains,

and imagine that they have discovered an everlasting fountain, they are assuming a pathetic nonsense. The real waters from which men ultimately must assuage the thirst of mind and soul are those which flow from deep, far springs. They flow fresh, it is true, into the sunlight of the present world, with the new current that living lips must drink; but they issue, not merely from the rains and dews of a day, but from the patient accumulation gathered into the earth through long periods of the past. What we need, therefore, in our day is not the mere self-contained opinion that any individual or any generation may collect in its shallow experience. What we want is the expression and interpretation of all that has been truest and deepest in that wonderful continuity of human life which reaches far back through the years. And when we look at the results of what I have called the moral individualism of our time, provincial and ephemeral and juvenile as so much of it is, we realize that its difficulty is exactly in the fact that it has no depth. It may have a gay and glancing surface, like the pool of new fallen-rain, but it does not satisfy men's thirst for nobility. Try to drink from it any real refreshment, for the eagerness of the morning,

for the long labor of noonday, or for the rest of the night, and its shallow waters are muddy with the first invitation of the lips. No. The non-religion of today, and the self-sufficiency of people who think that, out of their own unrelatedness, they can produce that which will satisfy the needs of life, is a poor boast which goes bankrupt before the facts.

Meanwhile, at the gateways of life, though many have turned their backs, and many have thought that they could find another to take his place, there stands the quiet figure of Jesus, and again and again men who have grown disillusioned for something else that might give to life what he can give, turn and cry out, as Peter cried in the beginning, "Thou hast the words of eternal life."

II

So then we turn directly to the second of the two judgments which we marked at the beginning. There is the judgment of those who assume that Jesus has no ultimate importance, and there is the judgment now of those who, at every demonstration of life's deepening reality, are sure that nothing is of im-

portance except in relationship to the truth he brings.

I make bold to say that it is not only the disciples of Jesus Christ who know this. Down in their deepest awareness, even those who turn away from him have haunting intimations of it. We noted that those who went away from Christ might be thought of under three classes: those who are drawn by the first contagion of fresh interest and then have lost it; those who find that loyalty to him must be bought at the price of other values which they want; and those who believe in a general way in his objectives, but hold him to be a futile visionary. Yet every one of these kinds of men now and again will find themselves compelled to recognize that Jesus does represent a sweep and profundity of life which they lack. "Thou hast the words of eternal life," said Peter. "Eternal life" does not mean merely life everlasting. It is not a question of how long life goes on, but of the breadth and height which it reaches. No man can look at Jesus Christ and not know that the life of Jesus had a spaciousness which his does not possess. No one can look at Jesus without realizing, at least in partial moments, that Jesus, in the boldness of his purposes, in the

grandeur of his deliberate daring, in the hidden energy which he somehow drew upon, and in the influences he set in motion, lived with such a mighty fulness as makes even the farthest reach of other lives seem small.

But the secret which was in his own life has not been the only thing which has made Jesus significant to those who have come close to him. Rather, it is the additional fact that he can impart that secret to them. He can give to his disciples' spirits the sense of being in contact with those eternal forces from which illimitable life and power flow. He makes men believe in God—that first—and in the kind of God whom his own experience knew. Not everyone believes in God as Jesus did; but surely everyone would admit that it would be an uplifting thing to be able to do so. At the critical moments of our experience we realize that acutely. Some sharp temptation comes, and a man sees his own moral resources crumble and knows that he needs a higher authority to keep him true. Grief comes, and through the darkness that overwhelms the whole aspect of his world the heart looks up in awful wistfulness to find a love that is greater than death and time. Friends fall away, or some great cause to which life has

been devoted seems about to go down in disaster; and then the soul of the strongest man, by the very measure of those desires that have been his strength, looks for some eternal ally who will not fail. Yes, men may confess the dimness and imperfection of their belief in God. But where is the real man who will say that he would like to lose the measure of belief that he has,—and who does not desire to have more? Well, it is that *more* which Jesus always has given and gives now. The more intimately men commune by prayer and study with the spirit of his life as the gospels have revealed it, the more his own personality grows upon them as the shaping force for all their faith, and the more they feel the reality of that in which he trusted. That great interpreter of religious thought, Frederick W. Robertson, once wrote: "My experience is closing into this, that I turn from everything to Christ. I think I get glimpses into His mind, and I am sure that I love Him more and more. A sublime feeling of a Presence comes upon me at times which makes inward solitariness a trifle to talk about." And when this vivid sense of the presence of Jesus comes upon men, they look at him and perceive that his eyes are looking up and on to Some-

thing beyond himself. Above him, and around him, and beyond him, was the Infinite Love in which he confided. Through a world of bitter contradiction, of sin and death and disaster, he moved unafraid in the power of his unshaken confidence that at the heart of all things Love reigns and over all things Love will triumph. In the strength of that example of Jesus, a man finds the courage to say, "I believe that Jesus was right. By the results which it worked in him, I trust the reality of his faith. I will look up, as he did, to find the face of God. I will trust, as he did, all those noblest intimations of my soul which are like the voice of the infinite soul speaking to the growing soul in me. I will adventure, in the glory of the trust that, as I go forward in the name of God, I shall experience his certainty and know his sufficient comradeship more and more." This is what Jesus has helped men to do, and no other influence which history has known can do it as he has done. If we want the inspiration that leads us to find God and the interpretation that shows us a God worth our finding, then to whom shall we go except to Jesus?

Furthermore, he teaches us to believe in man. This poor human nature of ours is

sometimes a very disillusioning thing. When we watch its sins and follies, we are almost tempted to ask, Of what value is this whole business of our human life? Then the figure of Jesus stands in the midst of this humanity, and we see it differently. We watch him disclose the holy possibilities in men and women whom we might have despised, the longing for purity deep down in the heart that is stained with sin, the capacity for flaming devotion to righteousness in the very life which had been most passionate in evil, the single power of a new purpose which can be welded by the fire of God in a personality hitherto split into contradictory and ignoble fragments. The great human redemptions of this world have been wrought by men who have learned from Jesus to see the divine worth in their lowliest brethren. And if the history of these last nineteen hundred years contains the record of slaves made free, of ignorant men lifted into knowledge, of old tyrannies overturned to make room for new democracies of opportunity, the reason is that the spirit of Christ has worked in the hearts of men to champion in their world those human values which he had taught them to see.

Nor is it in great events of history only that

the influence of Christ in this respect is manifest. In numberless careers of inconspicuous devotion his inspiration is working now. In the doctor who gives the utmost of his skill to the little child in some poor man's house, in the girl who carries her refinement and her eager spirit into the daily routine of the teaching of a public school, in the missionary who goes out to the ignorant, pitiful people whom the man with no vision of Jesus would think beneath his notice, there is represented today the power of Christ to disclose the eternal values which otherwise would go unseen. "I will try," said one of the most beautiful souls of our generation, as she faced a class of backward girls, "to give them all that the years have brought to my own soul. God help me to give what He gave, myself, and to make that self worth something to somebody. Teach me to love all as He has loved, for the sake of the infinite possibilities locked up in every human soul." And again she wrote: "Christianity meets the want of every heart, only it takes * * * the spirit of Christ himself in order to know when and how to speak." In the hearts all round us, there are wants to which it is easy to be blind. There are aspirations too, waiting to be set free. And for

the word of confidence and of challenge which shall have releasing power, to whom shall we go except to Jesus?

In a world that learns to believe in God and to believe in man, there is a new kingdom to be built. It is the kingdom of a better human brotherhood, founded on a wider justice, conceived in a finer mercy, held together by the spirit of a mutual service. Here and there the builders of this better world arise—statesmen in public office, seers or prophets within the ranks of our general citizenship who understand what is our task today. We must deliver our human society from the entail of hate and from the curse of war. To have a part in that is a better thing than to pile up money today which tomorrow will scatter, a better thing than to increase the material pride and prosperity of one's own nation, while meantime the blind forces gather which might drag all nations down to bloody doom. Men called Jesus a visionary long ago, and ideals which rise from the spirit of Jesus may be called visionary now. But there is nothing so certain in the experience of these years as the fact that nothing less daring than the spirit of Jesus holds the keys to practical achievements in its grasp. Science is a two-edged

tool and can be turned impartially, not only to service, but to merciless destruction. Education may make men more efficient in virtue, but also it can make them more shrewd and deadly in their sin. Greed and self-interest and material shrewdness may seem to lay the foundations for advantage; but those foundations are as so much sand before the flood of human passions which they do nothing to arrest. The only thing which can give us new assurance for our world is a new heart in the peoples, and the only force great enough to create it is the spirit of Jesus Christ. To the shallow, to the indifferent, to the wholly selfish, such words as these would have no appeal; but in their heart of hearts, the multitudes of men do not want to be shallow and indifferent and selfish. We want to make a better country. We want to leave our children a kinder and a gentler world. We know that no other thing is so crucially important as that individual men and women should possess in their own thoughts, and so cause to be reflected in public choice and in national will, those spiritual ideals which alone can shape the awful energies of our world so that they shall end in life and not in death for nations everywhere. In times of their pride and of their

shallowness, men may turn away from Jesus; but in the time of aroused conscience and of clearest understanding, the wisest and best in our generation are turning back to him. Echoing through the vastness of all our world's destiny, comes once again the inescapable question of that far-off but ever-present faith: "Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."